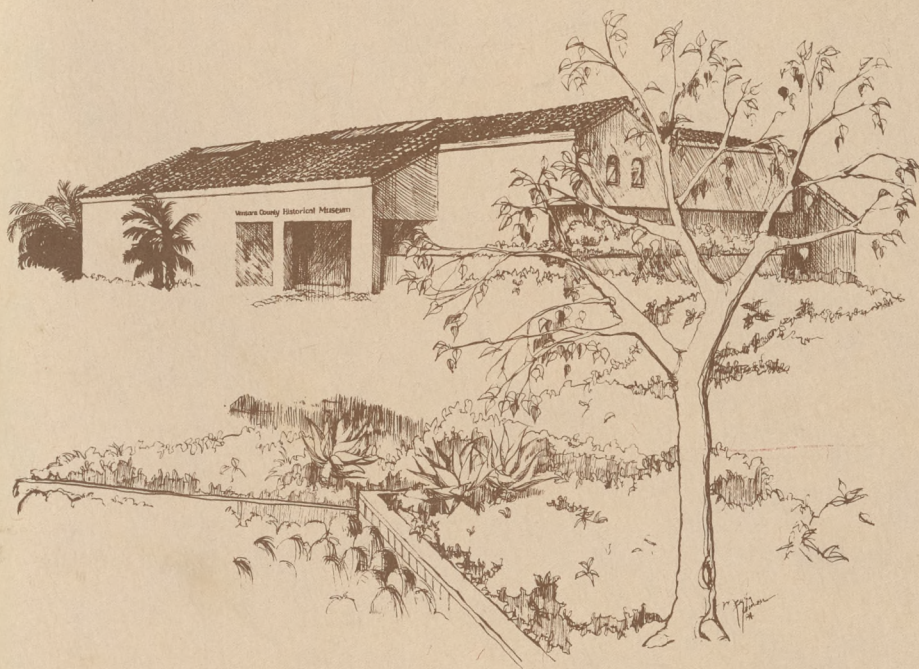
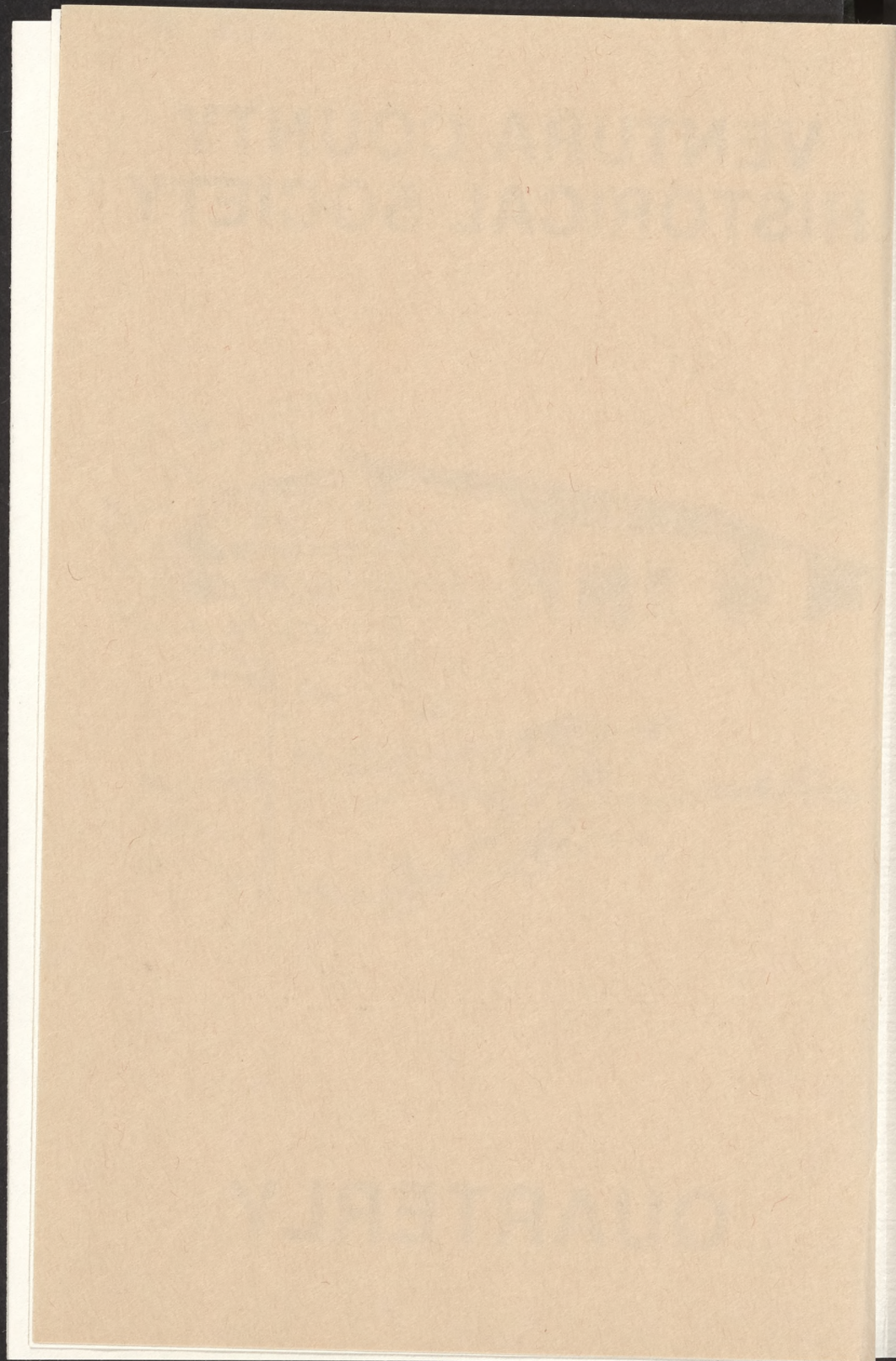


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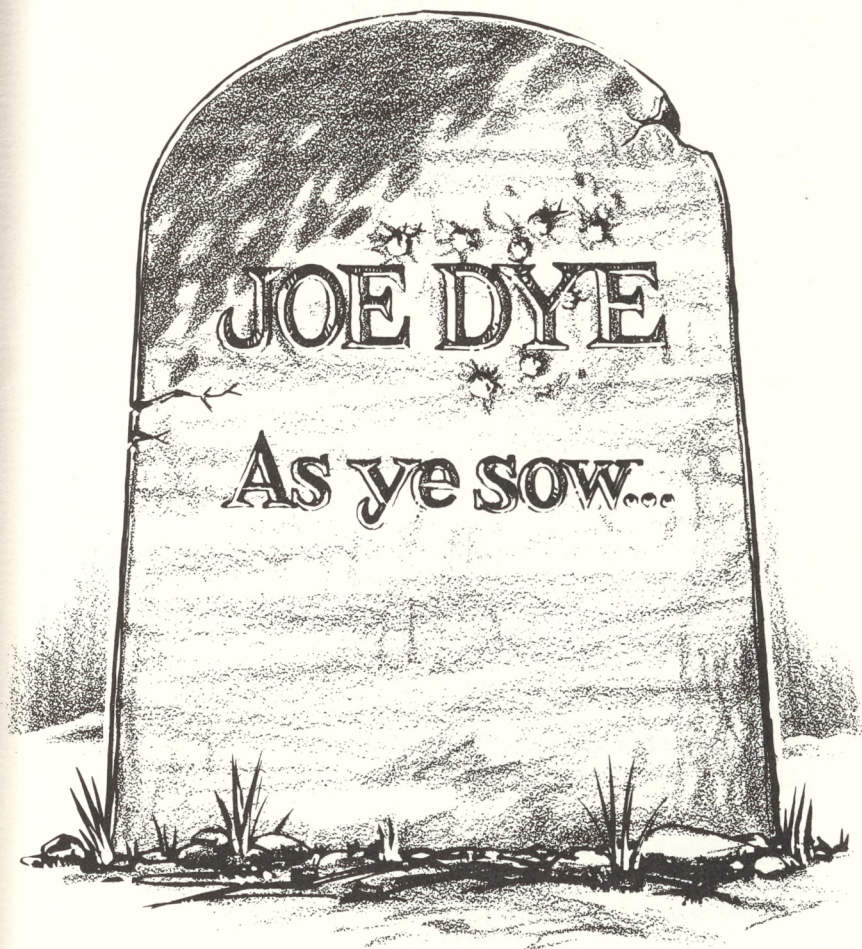
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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOE DYE: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GUNFIGHTER

By Charles F. Outland

BUSHWACKED!

Joe Dye never knew what hit him. One seldom does when bushwacked at close range with a double-barreled shotgun. Startled Los Angeles passers-by saw Joe throw up his hands and fall. Some said he uttered not a word and died before he hit the sidewalk; others claimed that he cried out, "My God!" A doctor, the first to reach the fallen man, asserted that Dye lived for seven minutes but said nothing. Most agreed that just before the fatal blasts Joe had hesitated, turned toward the New Arlington House across the street as though distracted by something, and reached for his gun.

If any of the witnesses had looked up at the window of room 27 of the New Arlington on Commercial Street, they would have seen the still-smoking gun barrels being hastily withdrawn behind the curtains. When finally they did gaze in that direction, all they saw were two ladies leaning out the window. At least the *Los Angeles Times* of May 15, 1891, said they were "ladies," which made it sort of semi-official. The girls later testified that the murderer had dropped the gun and departed posthaste leaving behind his hat and belongings.

Meanwhile, a very distraught Mason Bradfield was exiting the New Arlington on the Wilmington Street side of the hotel. The baby-faced, wild-eyed killer ran headlong into the arms of Police Officer Roberts, who was rushing to the scene of the gunfire. Bradfield's wild appearance convinced Roberts that he had surrounded the source of the shooting. A large revolver that Bradfield was carrying in his left hand, plus a long knife on his person, could have been contributing factors in Roberts' rationale. The captive claimed he was running to the police station to surrender, a commendable aspiration in which the officer was only too happy to be of assistance.

News that the most feared gunman in Los Angeles and Ventura counties had been assassinated by his former protege spread like a brush fire in a Santa Ana wind. Dye's old friends could not believe that young Bradfield could out-draw the man who was always "known to be 'oxed' at all times,

and as handy with his pistol as any man that ever walked the streets of Los Angeles.'"¹ It was only when they learned that it was a plain old-fashioned Western dry-gulching pure and simple that they were convinced.

Hundreds of Angelenos hurried to view the scene. In fact, extra police had to be called out to protect the body until the coroner arrived and moved the corpse of the man who "could stand up and shoot a man down without batting an eyelash"² to Orr & Sutch's undertaking rooms. An examination by the coroner revealed nine shots had entered Dye's body, any one of which would have proved fatal. Bradfield may have been wild-eyed, half-crazed, and excited, but his aim had been deadly.

The *Ventura Weekly Free Press*, in typical Ventura Board of Trade fashion, saw the practical side of the case: "Dye has the reputation of being a hard man in Ventura County. Several in the oil region will breathe easier now that he is dead and it is safe to say that a number of new oil claims will be taken before sundown this evening which were heretofore hidden through fear of Joe Dye."³

At the inquest into Dye's death, there was a remarkable uniformity in the testimony of those called to the stand. Most had heard the shots shortly after 3:00 p.m., and had then seen Joe lying on the sidewalk on Commercial Street or had seen him fall. No one, apparently, saw the shotgun protruding through the curtains of room 27 of the New Arlington or saw the shots fired. The jury after being out thirty minutes brought in its verdict:

We, the jurors summoned before the Coroner of Los Angeles County, at the Coroner's office in Los Angeles, California, on the 15th day of May, 1891, to inquire into the cause of death of Joseph Franklin Dye, find that the deceased was named Joseph F. Dye, a native of Kentucky, aged about 60 years, and that he met his death on the 14th day of May, 1891, by gunshot wounds inflicted, as we believe, by one Mason Bradfield.⁴

As a matter of fact, those jurors knew with a certainty that the gunshot wounds were inflicted by Mason Bradfield and no "as we believe" about it. But a bit of discretion was not out of order when dealing with one who had just gunned down the most feared quick-draw man in Southern California. Bradfield might be just the man to take over Dye's reputation.

THE TRIAL

With the murderer safely behind bars, there followed the usual legal formalities. In this instance it might be more accurate to call them unusual informalities.

Bradfield retained the law firm of Shinn & Ling to defend him, and these gentlemen took quick action to secure the release of their client. On May 26, they filed a motion in the Justice Court of M. T. Owens to dismiss the murder complaint against Bradfield on the grounds that the people had not introduced sufficient evidence to entitle the court to hold him to answer to the charge in Superior Court.

Lawyers have to do something to earn their fees, but Shinn & Ling must have known their motion would not get by any Justice of the Peace. It didn't. The barristers then came up with a demurrer they filed in Superior Court on June 15, that was even more ridiculous. The demurrer alleged that the stated facts were not sufficient to constitute a public offense, and even if it did the Court had no jurisdiction over the defendant or "over the subject matter of said information."⁵

Whether or not bushwacking Joe Dye constituted a public offense could be construed as argumentative in 1891. As for shooting a pedestrian from ambush not falling within the jurisdiction of the Superior Court of California in and for the County of Los Angeles, only a lawyer could have dreamed up that. Again Shinn & Ling drew a blank.

Justice of the Peace M. T. Owens had a much better idea. On May 15, Owens decided that Bradfield "did wilfully, unlawfully, feloniously, and of his malice aforethought kill and murder one Joseph Franklin Dye, a human being, with a loaded shotgun, the said loaded shotgun being then and there a deadly weapon." Judge Owens might well have added that a loaded shotgun is a deadly weapon any old place and time and not just "then and there."

A San Francisco *Examiner* reporter would later put the case in less legal phraseology more easily understood by the hoi polloi of San Francisco. The article is interesting if for no other reason than it indicates Dye's notorious reputation reached far beyond Southern California:

Joe Dye was killed a few weeks ago in Los Angeles. He had threatened a man who didn't want to be shot, and the man who didn't want to be shot bought a shotgun and resolved to give Joe a dose of Pioche fair play.

"Draw and —bang— defend yourself!" That is Pioche fair play. It got its name from the Nevada mining camp where it was practiced by the gun-fighters of early days with great success.

The man who didn't want to be shot located himself in a second-story window on a street through which Joe was sure to pass and when Joe showed up within easy buckshot range he called out to him, "Hello Joel!"

Joe looked up, reached for his gun and tumbled over with so

many holes in him that he looked like an old commutation ferryboat ticket.⁶

Either version is essentially correct. On June 1, Justice of the Peace Owens bound Bradfield over for trial in Superior Court on July 14, and ordered bail set at \$10,000. The *Ventura Democrat* of June 6, 1891, noted, "The accused furnished the requisite sureties and was released from custody." It can be assumed without too much fear of contradiction that the "requisite sureties" were furnished by Los Angeles oil capitalists who were delighted that Joseph Franklin Dye was no longer King of the Little Sespe, Big Sespe, and all that wild country's oil resources.

A transcript of Bradfield's trial, if available, would be interesting reading. While no transcript exists to the best of this writer's knowledge, a reasonable deduction of Bradfield's defense is possible from documents filed for record: Those persons subpoenaed to testify in his behalf; the judge's instructions to the jury, plus defendant's requested instructions that were refused by the court; and other miscellaneous records in the Los Angeles County Clerk's office.

Over thirty witnesses from Ventura County alone were summoned to testify in Bradfield's behalf, plus numerous well-known Los Angeles personalities. The list reads like a Who's Who of both counties: Stephen M. White, later to be United States Senator from California; Henry T. Gage, later a Governor of California; W. L. Hardison and Thomas R. Bard, co-founders of Union Oil Company along with Lyman Stewart. Such well-known Fillmore and Sespe names as Henley, Stone, Elkins, Goodenough, Burson, Mrs. Herman Haines, and Akers appear on the list subpoenaed to testify for Bradfield.

One disgruntled Santa Clara Valley taxpayer was able to see a silver lining in all these Fillmore and Sespe citizens going to Los Angeles: "The Sespe annual shooting scrape came off this year in Los Angeles..." and so Ventura County would not have to pay the costs of a trial.⁷

Sheriff William Reilly came from Ventura and signed a statement that he was too poor and unable to pay his expenses while in attendance at the trial, a portion of the expense form that most of the Ventura County affiants struck out. Reilly may have been giving the Ventura County Board of Supervisors a none-too-subtle hint that his salary could stand some readjustment.

From the foregoing it is easy to deduce Shinn & Ling's strategy. Dye had bragged far and wide that he would shoot and kill Thomas R. Bard on sight.⁸ Stephen White and Henry T. Gage were heavily involved in the Little Sespe oil strike, a field that Dye looked upon as his private kingdom. Sheriff Reilly

was well informed on Dye's behavior and trigger-happy habits in Ventura County, as were those subpoenaed from Fillmore and Sespe. It was well known in Los Angeles that Dye had threatened to kill Bradfield. If Shinn and Ling could convince a jury that Mason Bradfield was driven to the point of insanity because of his terrifying fear of Dye, they might have a chance.

All their requested but refused instructions to the jury from the court dealt with just this issue. Judge Smith would have none of it, but the jury rather liked the idea. Their verdict for the cold-blooded murder of Joseph Franklin Dye was *Not Guilty!* Mason Bradfield walked out of court a free man to shoot again another day.

WHO WAS JOE DYE?

There was one extremely fascinating aspect of the trial insofar as Ventura County was concerned. At the time of the murder it was noted in the Ventura newspapers that there was great interest in the case in the county. And yet neither the *Ventura Weekly Free Press* nor the *Ventura Weekly Democrat* printed one word about the trial or the testimony thereat. The *Free Press* did publish a short, hard-to-find notice of the verdict on page 5 of its issue of July 24, 1891, but that was all.

Why, if there was such intense interest in the killing, did the local editors shun printing the news of the trial? All through the Dye saga there runs a suspicion that these gentlemen of the fourth estate were waving the white feather when it came to local gunmen. While Dye was alive and his reputation well-known, he was always referred to in the papers as *Mister Joe F. Dye*, usually in connection with his oil interests in the Sespe. Many of the anecdotes of his life never appeared in print until after his death; tales for which Joe, if he had been living, would have shot any editor. Were these same editors now scared silly of the man who had gunned down Dye? News accounts of Bradfield's activities for the next twenty-five years might indicate just that.

Who was this man Dye (once characterized as being generous to a fault) that could terrorize whole communities with his bullying, braggadocio, and threats to kill prominent citizens? And why was his killer vindicated by a jury after it was proved to be as cold-blooded a case of murder as any prosecuting attorney could ask for? Today, to lie in wait to kill is one of the prerequisites for the death penalty. One member of the jury stated that they thought Bradfield was insane.⁹ Nonsense! That jury was convinced Mason Bradfield had disposed of a highly undesirable killer who deserved exactly what he got.

Most of the early information on Dye could only have had its source from

the man himself, and the two principal versions of his early life vary widely. If Joe was telling the truth when he registered to vote in Ventura County in 1886, he was born in Kentucky and was 55 years of age, an oil operator whose voting precinct was Sespe.

The Los Angeles *Times* in its issues of May 15, 16, 1891, placed Dye in Santa Fe, New Mexico, prior to 1852 working as a teamster. It was here that Joe began his career as a gunfighter, although it should be noted that the newspaper was skeptical of a story which had more the aspects of a Western cliché that could be applied to dozens of bad men west of the Pecos River.

In Santa Fe, Dye had a quarrel with a gunman known to be a dead shot and a "hard case," as the *Times* put it. Neither man was armed at the time, a circumstance in itself that throws suspicion on the tale. Lacking guns the boys fought it out with bare knuckles with Joe giving his opponent a sound thrashing. The victim swore he would shoot Dye on sight. They met again on the street a few hours later, and Joe asked the tough if he was "fixed." The latter replied that he was not armed. Whereupon Dye produced two six-shooters and told the man to take his choice. They then agreed to walk around the block in opposite directions and begin shooting on sight. In the gunfight that followed the Santa Fe "hard case" was hit and left for dead, but he recovered to be killed by a Salt Lake gambler. Joe later told his close friends that he had killed a man in Salt Lake.

THE RENEGADE LAWMAN

In its article of May 15, 1891, the *Times* stated that Dye had arrived in Los Angeles thirty-eight years earlier and served in the capacity of police officer and United States Marshall for twelve or fifteen years. He first gained notoriety in Los Angeles by shooting a horse-thief who was under arrest. According to Joe, his prisoner was trying to escape; the man's friends claimed Dye shot without sufficient cause. It was an old Western custom and usually safer and easier for the bounty hunter to bring them in dead when the reward for the desperado specified Dead or Alive.

In a letter to the Ventura *Free Press* of November 26, 1886, in which he offered a \$1000 reward for anyone who could prove he was ever convicted of any crime except in Ventura County, Joe Dye gave a very different version of his early career: From Kentucky he had gone to Texas before coming to California. After a short sojourn in Los Angeles, Joe claimed he had then spent the next ten years in the mines. He had then gone to Arizona to mine for a living and shoot Apaches, presumably just for the hell of it. He had then returned to Los Angeles on a more or less permanent basis.

In all these legends, if such they be, there is a strong supposition that Dye

fostered this badman image. There can be no question that it would aid him in amassing a sizeable fortune, estimated at \$200,000 at the time of his death.

From 1866 on, the checkered career of Joseph Franklin Dye is much easier to follow thanks to the columns of the *Los Angeles Star*, the *Los Angeles News*, the *Ventura Free Press*, and the *Ventura Signal*.

In February, 1866, John and James Kincaid appropriated a wagon and six horses from the rancho of Governor Downey without the owner's permission and then left the county. Sheriff Sanchez dispatched Special Deputy Sheriff J. F. Dye to catch the thieves. Joe left Los Angeles on February 8, and followed them toward Salt Lake. At Camp Cady he was able to procure fresh horses, a military escort, provisions and a guide. The party caught up with the Kincaids at the frontier settlements of Utah, where the thieves were captured and the stolen property recovered. Five weeks after leaving Los Angeles, Dye returned with his prisoners, the Downey horses being left at the rancho of Las Vegas to recruit.

This feat of horse-thief wrangling did much to enhance Joe in the eyes of the Angelenos. At a meeting of the Common Council in November, "A resolution was passed and signed by the Mayor appointing J. F. Dye a special police to be paid by the citizens in certain localities."¹⁰ Unfortunately, nothing was recorded respecting where the "certain localities" were or which citizens would pay the salary. It is obvious, however, that Joe Dye had come to be regarded as a very tough *hombre*, and his very presence in any part of the town would have a salubrious effect upon the behavior of the rowdies thereabouts.

The only arrest of record made by Dye after his appointment was one "Chinaman" for manufacturing cigars without a Federal license. The miscreant had constructed and concealed a cellar with a "cunningly devised trap door...that the highest order of detective talent was necessary in order to discover the whereabouts of his *sub rosa* factory."¹¹ This item would indicate that Dye's special police territory was Chinatown and the offensively named "Nigger" Alley.

By a strange quirk of fate it was a Chinese woman who was indirectly responsible for Joe's involvement in a Los Angeles gunfight that would have resulted in a myriad of published bits of Western Americana if it had occurred near someone's corral. It all started when Sing Lo, a Chinese woman owned by one Ah Jo, broke the heart of her master (and most of his pocketbook) by running away with another Chinese gentleman and a lot of Ah Jo's valuable jewelry. A reward of \$100 was posted for her capture and return to Los Angeles.

City Marshall William Warren and Officer Redona took up the chase and tracked the pair to Wilmington and then to Anaheim, where it was found that the lady had hired a Mexican "with a stylish turnout" (a buggy) and left in the direction of San Buenaventura. "Upon arriving at that pleasant little burg they found the object of their search in the hands of the marshall, who had arrested her a short time before their arrival."¹²

Now by all the rules of the game the Marshall of San Buenaventura should have received one-half the reward for capturing the woman, and Warren and Redona the other half for returning her to Los Angeles. But by some strange logic Dye felt he was entitled to the entire reward, although there is nothing in the evidence to suggest he was ever involved in the woman's capture or her return to Los Angeles.

It was the 31st of October and court was in session in Judge Trafford's court. Dye came into the room and made inquiries respecting the whereabouts of Marshall Warren and the Chinese woman. At about the same time Warren and Redona came into the room and then left with their prisoners. The marshall had taken one look at Dye's eyes and suspected there would be trouble. He took out his Derringer and carried it in his left hand hidden from Joe's gaze. Dye followed them out and hailed Warren and asked him how he (Dye) was going to get his money. Warren told him he didn't want anything to do with him. Dye then said: "Do you suppose I am going to be swindled out of my money in that way? Sir, you have robbed me out of that money." Dye could not see that Warren had his Derringer concealed behind him in his left hand. The gun may have given the marshall a false sense of security, for he then made the biggest and last mistake of his life. He called Joe a liar.

Dye grabbed his cane and raised it up to strike Warren and the marshall responded by shooting Joe with the Derringer, the bullet grazing the head of Special Officer Dye. Joe pulled his six-shooter and started firing, while Warren dropped the Derringer and drew his own six-shooter and began blazing away at Dye. The two men were in the middle of the street and only six feet apart. After a number of shots Warren fell. Someone said that thirteen shots were fired. Keeping score at a Western shoot-out isn't a necessity, but in this case it indicates both men had emptied their guns, plus the one shot fired by Warren with his Derringer.

Probably the best description of that classic gunfight was given by Major Horace Bell at the inquest into Warren's death. Bell had been the plaintiff in a suit with one Rodriguez that was being heard in court. When the gunshots rang out, Bell rushed outside at the height of the battle, which by now included Officer Redona and Constable Hester throwing lead on their own account. Both were wounded by flying bullets as was an innocent Chinese man with a near fatal wound to the head. Bell testified that Warren fell with



"Sir, you have robbed me out of that money."

the exclamation, "I am killed!" But Dye still fired another shot at the fallen marshall and moved quickly to his left and raised his gun again. At this point Bell rushed in and grabbed Dye by the hair and attempted to seize his gun. Joe broke loose and rushed at the fallen lawman striking him on the head with a gun. Again Bell grabbed Joe's pistol, which now fell from the man's hand. Dye then grabbed Warren with both hands, drew him upwards and took hold of him with his teeth. At this point other bystanders came to Bell's aid and pulled Dye loose and took him away.

After printing all the gory details of this classic Western shoot-out, the *Los Angeles Star* failed to publish one word concerning what happened to the almond-eyed thief from Chinatown who had started all the ruckus. There are times when newspaper editors can be frustrating.

TWISTED JUSTICE

In January, 1871, Joseph Franklin Dye was formally indicted for manslaughter. The trial that was held the following month must have been the worst farce ever heard in a Los Angeles courtroom and raised serious questions respecting Dye's political and business associates. It definitely was not the usual trial where the issues were decided by who could tell the biggest lies and stick with them the longest. "Only the witnesses for the prosecution were examined, and the case was submitted without argument, and the jury at once honorably acquitted the accused."¹³

The truth of the matter was that Judge Murray Morrison had directed the jury to bring in a verdict of acquittal. The *Star* for February 22, 1871, stated that this instruction was given on a motion of the defense. Fifteen years later Dye claimed that the prosecution had made the motion, to which he had objected strenuously:

I objected to this and asked to be allowed to show the conspiracy, but Judge Morrison said he had not the power to do so, as the district attorney had closed the case. The judge then turned to the jury in his chair and used these exact words: 'Gentlemen of the jury, I believe in God and I further believe that the hand of Almighty God has thrown a shield around J. F. Dye, and protected him against his determined destroyer, or he would not be alive and in your presence today. Your verdict must be acquittal.'¹⁴

It is unclear what conspiracy Joe was referring to unless it was some perverted logic that there were those who were trying to prevent him from claiming the \$100 reward for the capture of the Chinese woman.

Regardless of which side, if either, made a motion for acquittal, the fact that only certain prosecution witnesses were examined raises serious questions when one considers the sworn testimony at the coroner's inquest. The widow of Marshall Warren went straight to the point in a letter published in the *Star* on February 28, 1871:

If the only object of a legal investigation is to seek for *all* the facts in the case (in regard to a criminal prosecution), so as to meet the ends of justice, I should like to know (if such is the case) why it was that all the evidence for the prosecution was not brought forward and examined, as is generally the case in such prosecutions.

Several individuals, who were possessed of important facts, were ready to testify, but it appears by the prosecution that the ends of justice did not require this testimony.

But only such testimony was admitted as would clear the murderer.

Mrs. Warren claimed her husband had been warned in the morning that Dye intended to kill him, and that he would never live to see the election. "That fact being impressed on his mind, and knowing that Dye intended to kill him, should and would have been testified to had all the witnesses been called." Here was a letter from an obviously intelligent woman who knew her facts and wasn't afraid to state them. She had "hit the nail squarely on the head"; the same cannot be said for Judge Morrison and/or any others involved for the prosecution.

Joseph Franklin Dye was a free man now, ready and willing to kill again.

"JOE, YOU'RE A LIAR."

If the southland's worst bully got into any mischief during the following two and one-half years, it was minor in nature. The gunfight with Marshall Warren had not enhanced Joe's good name in Los Angeles, and seems to have sobered him down considerably. Warren had been a popular and respected officer, whose funeral was attended by hundreds of genuine mourners, something that could not be said for Dye twenty years later.

Joe, however, was manifesting many symptoms of paranoia, a mental disease that can be surrounded about as easily as a bad case of boils. Sooner or later it was bound to break out anew. On July 29, 1873, Joe treated Los Angeles to a scene the likes of which would not be repeated until Hollywood came up with the Keystone Kops.

Ben Truman, editor of the Los Angeles *Star*, heard the commotion from his office and ran with the crowd to find the source and newsworthiness. What he saw was Sheriff William Rowland and Joe Dye in a near-mortal combat: "We only know that we ran with the crowd, and saw Dye with one hand holding Rowland's beard, and with the latter (other hand) he held a pistol in close proximity to the latter's breast. That's all we saw, but we hear that there had been some trouble between the two gentlemen..."¹⁵ Truman had found a rather nice way to put it, one that would not offend Dye or endanger the *Star's* editor. At the preliminary hearing Sheriff Rowland had his say in respect to "some trouble between the two gentlemen."

Rowland had come in from his rancho that morning and met several friends who informed him that Dye was circulating a story that the sheriff was going to attend the People's Convention and pledge his support to the entire ticket. Rowland had no such intention, apparently, and said that he would look up Dye and straighten out the matter. His friends advised against such a course as it was known that Dye had been building up a resentment against the sheriff for several months. In fact, Joe had bragged he would pull Rowland's nose "when it suited his convenience."

The sheriff met up with Dye talking with one Capt. Beane in front of the Orient Saloon. After greeting both men pleasantly, Rowland confronted Joe with his story and asked for the source. Dye stated that a man by the name of Higbie had told him. The sheriff then suggested that the two of them go to Higbie and get the affair straightened out. Joe refused and demanded that Rowland bring Higbie to him. Bringing the mountain to Mohammed was not Sheriff Rowland's idea of the way things should be done. He then made the one mistake that could have cost him his life.

"Joe, you're a liar."

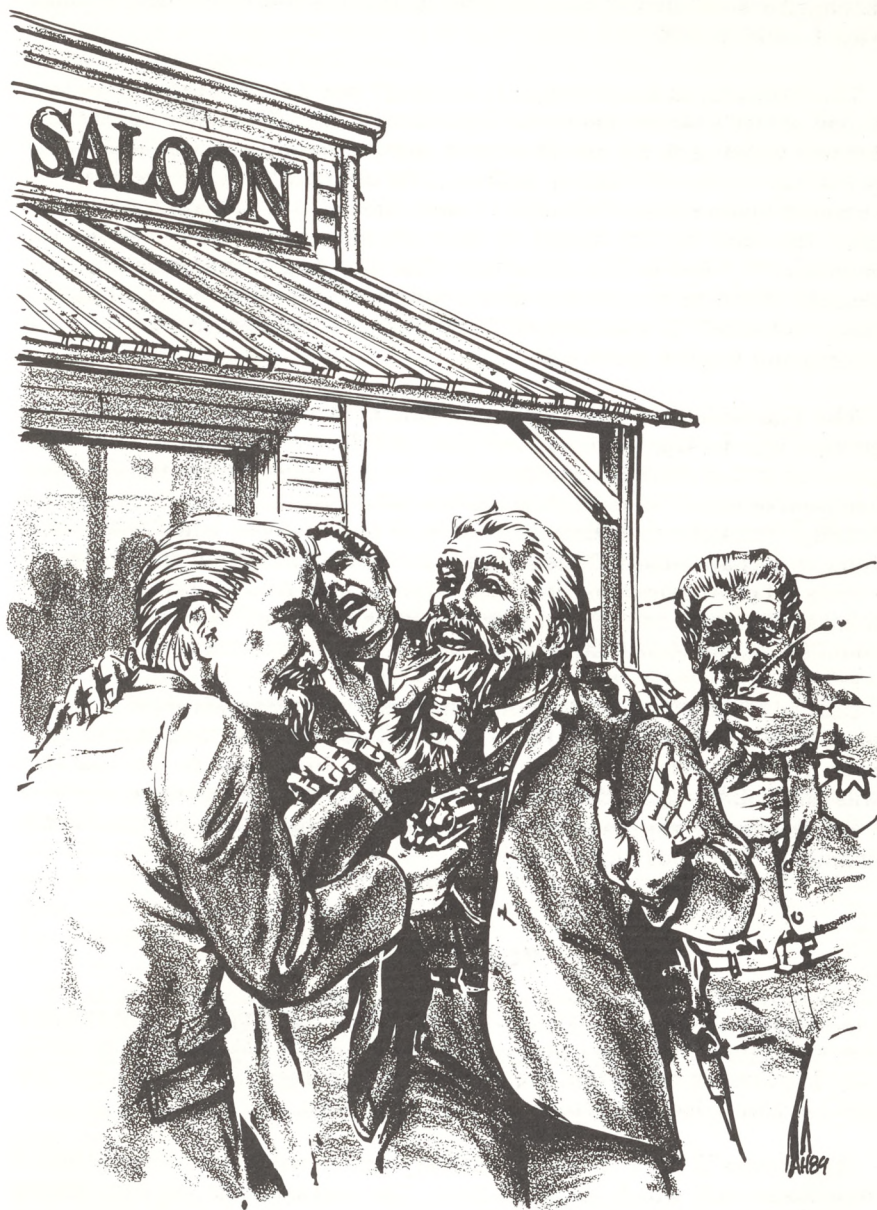
With one angry movement Dye grabbed the sheriff's beard with his left hand, drew his six-shooter with his right and placed it to his victim's breast yelling:

"Take it back or I'll shoot."

Rowland replied that he would not take anything back, that Joe didn't dare shoot.

Joe again demanded that the sheriff "take it back now," and again the latter refused.

For fully five minutes the farce continued. Officer McMurray tried to blow his police whistle for help, but no sounds came forth. He had fouled the instrument with tobacco juice!



"Take it back or I'll shoot."

By this time Detective Emil Harris and Policeman Hare had arrived and managed to separate the two men. Dye's pistol was confiscated and the man placed under arrest.

The testimony at the preliminary hearing¹⁶ was a superb example of how a man of Dye's reputation could frighten witnesses. Everyone agreed that Joe was yanking on the sheriff's beard, but only one or two would place his gun at the breast in a killing position. The ultimate in evasiveness was illustrated by one Juan Espinosa: "I saw some of this difficulty. I saw Dye have Rowland by the beard. I have no talk; I don't understand the language."¹⁷ That is one advantage that the Anglo-American does not possess. When he gets backed into a corner he can't come up with the excuse, "No sabe!" It was obvious from Espinosa's statement that he could understand English quite well.

The real shocker of the affair was Sheriff Rowland's demand that all charges against Dye be dismissed. The sheriff even went so far as to deny under oath that events took place which witness after witness testified they had seen or heard. Here was the top law enforcement officer of Los Angeles County. The defendant had threatened to pull his nose when it was convenient; he had subjected the sheriff to a disgraceful indignity on the public streets of Los Angeles and threatened to shoot him. And yet Rowland on the witness stand stated, "I want this prosecution to stop."¹⁸ Even the sheriff could show the white feather when Joe Dye was involved.

Justice of the Peace Trafford did not see it that way and ordered Dye held to answer for the crime charged. However, there does not appear to have been any further legal proceedings in the case. In view of the fact that Dye was next found engaged in placer mining in the Alamo Mountain region of Ventura County suggests that the charges may have been dropped in exchange for Joe's leaving town.

BLACK GOLD

On July 1, 1874, J. F. Dye, S. Levy and Chas. A Holmes certified and filed for record that they were a partnership known as the Piru Mining Company. The legal notice stated that they were all residents of Los Angeles, but that did not mean Joe was actually living in the town.

The winter of 1874-75 was the fifth dry year in succession, leaving little if any water with which to placer mine. The partners sold the Piru Mining Company to the firm of Jones & Turk, which promptly took out two pounds of gold following the wet winter of 1875-76. It had taken three men just six days to placer the metal. Again lack of water shut down operations.

Those two pounds of gold, given other circumstances, might have set Dye off on an excuse to shoot Jones & Turk under the delusion he had been cheated. But Joe had stumbled on to a far more lucrative "mine," the oil springs of the Sespe's Tar Creek.

Just when Dye made his momentous discovery, one that would lead to wealth and murder, is something of a mystery. Shortly before he was bushwacked by Bradfield, Joe bragged that he had been the first man in California to locate an oil claim. It was in 1856, while prospecting for gold in Ventura County.¹⁹ If true, this places an awkward interpretation upon his claim in the *Ventura Free Press* of November 26, 1886, that he was living in the mines for ten years after leaving Los Angeles in 1852. While Joe may have discovered Tar Creek as early as 1856, there is another and possibly more plausible explanation.

It was on July 1, 1874, that the Piru Mining Company had filed its record of partnership. Six weeks later the *Ventura Signal* of August 8, 1874, noted the discovery of one hundred oil springs (later reduced to twenty) on a branch of Sespe Creek. The springs were located on a bank of a gulch, and it was claimed they could be developed into producing 100 barrels of oil per day. No name of the man who made the discovery was given.

Two weeks later the *Signal* quoting the *Los Angeles Express*, ran an impossibly optimistic report on a southern California underground "oil stream" that ran from Pico Canyon to Coal Oil Point above Santa Barbara, of which the Sespe discovery was a mere outcropping. It was noted that San Francisco capitalists had staked claims and were preparing to develop.

Nothing further appeared on the subject until May 15, 1875, when the *Signal* ran the following article: "Somewhere in the Alamo Mountains Mr. Joe Dye has discovered a flow of fine petroleum, almost pure; so pure that it can be put into a lamp and burned without refining. It is said to be one of the best ever found in this state." The article had been copied from the *Bakersfield Southern Californian*.

What had happened? There are several routes out of the Alamo Mountain country. One of those routes was an old Indian trail that led straight to the Sespe and bisected Tar Creek close to those oil springs. It would not be a bad guess that Dye took this route when he came to file the record of partnership in the Piru Mining Company and accidentally made the discovery at that time.

It would be even more interesting in light of subsequent developments to know who those San Francisco capitalists were that had staked out no less than eighty claims, aided and abetted by some of their Los Angeles brethren.

Joe, who had first made the discovery, regarded anyone else coming in as an infringement on his personal rights, and unless they came in on his terms, he looked upon them as personal enemies. His temper and his trigger finger worked too harmoniously to make him a desirable acquaintance or an antagonist to be taken lightly. How many of those San Francisco and Los Angeles capitalists he scared into "a piece of the action" will never be known, but there was no question that Joe Dye was king and cock of the Sespe.

D. C. "Coal Oil" Scott was one likely San Francisco candidate, and like so many others he ran into problems with Dye, problems that were pending in a court action. One day the two met in a Santa Paula saloon and had a drink together. Scott scrupulously avoided any mention of their conflicting claims to oil lands in the Little Sespe, but Joe could not resist bringing up the subject and making assertions that were at slight variance to the truth. Before Scott thought, he made the unforgivable charge:

"Joe, you're a liar!"

Unlike Marshall Warren, Scott lived to tell the results of that *faux pas*, but not until after Joe was dead: "As soon as the words were out of my mouth he yanked his revolver and stuck it under my nose. But I was too quick for him. I took it all back before he could shoot."²⁰

By April, 1878, activity in the Little Sespe had reached a point where the Little Sespe Petroleum District was formed. It is obvious from reading the accounts of the meetings that Joe Dye and Capt. Wesley Roberts were the powers behind the throne. Roberts, who would build the first road into Tar Creek in 1879, was no stranger to Dye. At the time of the Warren gunfight in Los Angeles, he had been one of Dye's sureties and a witness in his behalf.

As for Joe, he managed to keep a low profile during most of the first half of the 1880s. On one occasion he did do some shooting: He killed a mountain lion attempting to make off with a child.

By August, 1886, Dye had ideas of going into the irrigation business:

Mr. Joe Dye is having a water ditch taken out from the Pole Creek; also, we hear, that work will soon commence on the large ditch that was begun by Roberts & Dye several years ago at a point on the Sespe near the Kentuck oil well. Evidently, Joe has no fears of the riparianists... This ditch when completed will furnish water sufficient for all arable land on the north side of the Santa Clara from Sespe to Santa Paula.²¹

If fate in the form of a flirtatious wife had not intervened, and if Joe had actually taken Sespe River water to which others already had riparian rights, the results would have been fascinating to say the least. To have even dreamed of the scheme just nine and one-half years after the murder of T. Wallace More for building just such a ditch, was slightly on the side of poor judgment. Joe might have found more lead flying through the air than even that shield thrown around him by the hand of Almighty God could protect him against.

Two weeks after the announcement of Joe's irrigation scheme, he was lodged in the Ventura County jail for the murder of Herman Haines.

THE FAITHLESS WIFE

There are several existing versions of what happened in Morris Cohn's store that day, the most intriguing being the one the old-timers, and later their offspring, used to tell. According to this apocryphal tale Dye walked into the saloon on the northeast corner of Mill and Main streets in Santa Paula, stepped up to Haines, spit in his eye, and when Haines reached for his gun, Joe outdrew him and shot in "self-defense." The wounded Haines ran out on to Main Street with Joe in pursuit and still shooting. Haines finally fell mortally wounded in the middle of the street.

A small portion of the story was corroborated by Mrs. Dr. Mott, who was sitting in the store window across the street knitting. The Motts had arrived in town in May and were living temporarily in the vacant store. Mrs. Mott witnessed the action after the men came out on the street, but forgot to tell her husband for some forty years.²²

A second version of the affair was published in the San Francisco *Examiner* and reprinted in the Ventura *Democrat* at the time Bradfield shot Dye. According to this yellow journalism account, Haines, in mortal fear of Dye, had purchased an old Henry rifle and carried it wherever he went. Stepping into Cohn's, he saw Dye and lifted the rifle to his shoulder and pulled the trigger; nothing happened. "It is not a good scheme for a man to pack a gun unless he packs a little common sense and presence of mind along with it." Haines had forgotten to put a cartridge into the barrel of his rifle. What happened next was Joe Dye shooting holes in Haines and then being acquitted on a plea of self-defense.

This tale has so many errors in it, it can be dismissed as pure fiction. The *Democrat* in reprinting the story as much as informed its readers of this fact.

Probably the most accurate account was printed in the *Ventura Free Press* on September 3, 1886:

Witnesses of the tragedy at Santa Paula yesterday say that the shooting of Haines was entirely unprovoked. Dye was standing in Cohn's store when Haines came in carrying a Winchester²³ rifle. He set his gun down by the door and going on in, passed the time of day²⁴ with Dye. 'Don't speak to me,' Dye said — and at the same time struck Haines in the face. Mr. Cohn caught hold of Dye but was thrown to one side, and Haines started for his gun — Dye following. Mr. Haines secured his rifle and ran behind the counter. His assailant was close upon him, however, and knocking up the muzzle of the gun, shot the man twice with his revolver. Haines then dropped the rifle and started for the door. Dye followed him out upon the porch and shot him again as he was making his way up the street. Haines ran around the corner to escape his assailant and Dye gave himself up to Constable Sutton.

One question arises: Was Cohn's a store or a saloon? For many years Morris Cohn had been a notorious purveyor of dry goods and wet goods. The probabilities are that there were more wet goods than dry goods when the shooting started.

A second point cannot be left unsaid. Despite the fact that he had once been postmaster at Cienega, Herman Haines was no epitome of righteousness or community leadership. The previous April he had assaulted one C. H. Decker with a deadly weapon that would have justified Decker in killing Haines on the spot. Law-abiding citizens of the Sespe adopted a resolution at the time in which they condemned District Attorney Orestes Orr in no uncertain terms for failing to convict Haines of the crime.²⁵

Joseph F. Dye was held to answer to the charge of murder with his bail set at \$10,000. He gave bond with some prominent Los Angeles capitalists as sureties. With Henry T. Gage and Stephen M. White acting as his attorneys, it requires no special sense of olfactory perception to smell Little Sespe oil in the proceedings.

Editor Stephen Bowers of the *Free Press* did not like the way things were going, and when that old Methodist curmudgeon didn't like something he wasn't bashful about saying so: "One or two first class hangings in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties would have a salutary effect. Murders are becoming too common in both counties..."²⁶ (A first class hanging could be described as one in which certain legal formalities are dispensed with. It was quicker, thus giving the bleeding hearts less time in which to hemorrhage. It was also cheaper as no scaffold was required; any

old tree limb or utility pole would do.)

The trial of Joe Dye for the murder of Herman Haines was the best show to hit town in years. In fact, it was so "good" that Stephen Bowers refrained from printing most of the lurid testimony, a rather odd reaction for one who had openly advocated a first class hanging for Dye. It did not, however, keep the ladies of the town from staying until the "last dog was hung.": "The courtroom was crowded last night to hear the closing of Hon. S. M. White's address for the defense. Many ladies were present. Mr. White delivered a very eloquent and logical speech, lasting in all about three hours. His pathetic appeal brought tears to the eyes of both the jury and audience."²⁷

Earlier, Henry T. Gage had opened the defense argument with an address of "three to four hours." If Gage and White's plan was to filibuster the jury into a Not Guilty verdict, the strategy misfired. The jury after deliberating for two and one-half hours brought in a verdict of Guilty of Murder in the Second Degree.

The testimony that Gage and White had counted on to gain an acquittal for their client concerned the behavior of Dye's wife. Mrs. Dye had been exchanging notes, apparently of an amorous nature, with H. J. Crow of Los Angeles. Haines had been the intermediary in the delivery thereof, a fact that Dye discovered only a few days before the murder. It was for this reason that Joe was in no mood "to pass the time of day" with Haines when he walked into Cohn's leaving his rifle at the door.

Crow appears to have been involved in the Sespe oil region as well as being the "downfall" of Mrs. Dye, as the *Los Angeles Express* put it. Crow would sue the *Express* for \$50,000 because of that remark, which he claimed damaged his good name. The *Express* did a little private sleuthing, decided that fifty cents would be a high price for Crow's good name, and publicly stated that he was a very black Crow indeed. If he thought his good name was worth \$50,000, the *Express* proposed to nail his wings to the barn door for all to see.

Immediately upon the conviction of Dye, his attorneys filed a notice of an appeal and requested bail for their client. Both matters dragged on for months and ended up in the State Supreme Court. As a result it was not until March 14, 1887, that Sheriff Snodgrass left for San Quentin with Dye, who had been sentenced to sixteen years in the penitentiary the week before.

Two days later, "Sheriff Snodgrass returned with J. F. Dye, the Supreme Court having granted a stay of proceedings pending a motion to admit defendant to bail. This will probably be decided by the Supreme

Court in a few days, after which it will consider the motion for a new trial." ²⁸ If the California State Supreme Court ever decided *anything* in a few days, that would be news. It was just short of one year later that the court granted Dye a new trial. On March 8, 1888, the Ventura County Superior Court then granted bail in the sum of \$10,000. The action of the Supreme Court could very easily have turned into its worst decision prior to the advent of Rose Bird.

Dye had spent fourteen months in durance vile, time enough for many changes to have taken place on his self-deeded territory, the Sespe. Hardison & Stewart Oil Company had purchased sixty percent of the old Los Angeles Oil Company's holdings. Dye's freedom on bail scared the very daylight out of W. L. Hardison, who appealed to Thomas R. Bard for aid in taming the Tiger of the Sespe. There really wasn't much that Bard could do, but whatever it was earned him the everlasting enmity of Joe Dye. Joe made no secret of what he was going to do to Bard. Thereafter, Bard carried pistols when business required his presence in Santa Paula.

The political and judicial clout of Henry Gage and Stephen White delayed the second trial until November, 1888. It was mostly a repetition of the first trial except for one vital piece of evidence. Two days before the shooting, Haines had written a long, rambling letter to an E. L. Baker, Secretary and Confidential Clerk of H. J. Crow. The *Free Press* described the introduction of this letter into evidence as "the turning point" in the trial. How it could possibly have resulted in Dye's acquittal would baffle any modern lawyer, judge, or juryman. But acquit him it did, and Joe was again a free man.

Haines' letter²⁹ was unquestionably intended to warn Crow that Dye was aware of Mrs. Dye's fall from grace. Joe had suspected something of the sort and had seen Haines' son go to the Dye home and accept a note from Mrs. Dye. Haines had sent the boy to get the note, which was to be delivered to his father, who in turn would take it to Crow in Los Angeles. Dye quickly saddled up his horse and ran the lad far enough up Pole Canyon where noise would not attract attention.

Catching the boy, Dye demanded the note. The youngster refused to surrender it. Joe then dismounted, grabbed the lad, roughed him up badly, and drawing his six-shooter shoved it against his victim's head in the typical Joe Dye *modus operandi*. Either the boy would give up the note or else Joe would shoot him, kill his father, and then shoot Mrs. Dye for good measure. The threat was effective.

Dye read the note and then raced home to confront his wife with her perfidy and demand to see Crow's letters. She denied that there were any. Again Joe drew his pistol and grabbing the woman with one hand he held



Catching the boy, Dye demanded the note.

the gun to her head with the other, threatening to fire if she refused to produce Crow's letters. At last she admitted they were in the bottom of her trunk.

In his letter to Baker, Haines stated that he never knew what was in the notes and letters he had delivered between Crow and Mrs. Dye, but admitted he wished he knew what was in the note that Dye had taken from his son. He also stated that Dye had told him not to come back to work up the Sespe, indicating there had been some kind of confrontation between the two men before the day of the murder.

What happened between the time Haines wrote that letter and the day of the shooting is not known. It is known that Mrs. Dye caught the first stagecoach out of town and headed for San Francisco, as Haines had so stated in his letter to Baker.

With the foregoing in mind, the events in Cohn's two days later became inexplicable if the stories of eyewitnesses are taken literally. The Joe Dye in Cohn's was the same Joe Dye that had shot and killed a horse-thief trying to "escape." It was the same Joe Dye who had shot Marshall Warren, and with Warren helpless and dying on the street had shot him again, and when deprived of his gun had pulled the officer up and attacked him with his teeth. It was the same Joe Dye who had humiliated Sheriff Rowland and publicly threatened to shoot him on the streets of Los Angeles. Yes, it was the same Joe Dye who two days earlier had badly beaten Haines' own son, held a gun to his head and threatened to kill him, his father and Mrs. Dye; and yet these witnesses stated that Haines came into Cohn's, left his rifle leaning by the door, and walked over to Dye to "pass the time of day." All of which leads to the conclusion that either Haines or the witnesses were crazy, or this writer is rapidly getting that way. The only explanation for Dye's acquittal on the strength of that letter from Haines to Baker would have to be that by the standards of 1888, a perfidious wife was justification for murder.

Dye had been free on bail since March. Apparently no one thought to search the man at the time of the second trial in November, 1888. If they had they would have found Joe armed and prepared to shoot the judge and escape in the event he was found guilty. In the words of one of the few men who knew of this development: "But few people really knew the desperate man Joe Dye was." There can be little doubt that Joe would have made the attempt or have been killed in the effort. The discovery that he was armed came just after the verdict of Not Guilty was announced, "but as the verdict was favorable to him he made no hostile action and subsequently said he cherished no ill-will toward anyone."³⁰

Which, after all, was damned decent of the fellow.

DIRTY DEALING

With all the legal shackles removed, an unfettered Joe Dye was once again in a position to bully, bulldoze, and pistol-threaten his neighbors in the Sespe and Little Sespe oil regions. W. L. Hardison of Hardison & Stewart was particularly concerned. Part of this anxiety stemmed from, of all things, a dog fight.

According to the account printed in the *Ventura Democrat* of July 18, 1891, Dye and his dog had gone over to pay a neighborly visit on J. C. Udall, an oil man who had picked up many claims that had expired during the lull in the oil business. But Joe's dog did not regard the visit as neighborly and promptly picked a fight with Udall's dog. Udall attempted to separate the brutes, but Joe said, "Let them fight it out, otherwise they'll fight every time they see each other." Udall's dog proceeded to tear Dye's dog to shreds, a development that Joe had not anticipated. Seething with rage he went home, got his rifle, and returned and killed Udall's dog and then threatened to do the same to its owner as soon as it became convenient.

Hardison had no doubts that Joe intended to do just that and wrote Bard to that effect.³¹ Obviously, fourteen months behind bars had not changed the desperado in Joe Dye.

Dye was far from inactive in legitimate business affairs during this period. In one legal advertisement he advised a business partner that he had expended \$100 on Star Oil No. 2 Mining Claim and if said partner, Minor B. Smoot, did not come up with his share he forfeited all rights in the claims.

In another and more important legal advertisement in the *Ventura Weekly Vidette* of March 1, 1890, Dye gave notice of his intent to buy timber lands of lots 6 and 7 of Section 2, Township 4 North, Range 20 West. One of the witnesses to this notice was Mason Bradfield, later to be Joe's assassin. Another was George Henley, who would eventually become the owner of the property. A quarter of a century later George would try to outrun the lead being shot at him on Fillmore's Central Avenue by this same Mason Bradfield. Verily, this Sespe was a strange phenomenon; perhaps it was the water the boys drank.

Joe appears to have had big plans here, as he outlined to the *Los Angeles Herald* how he was building a road from Fillmore Station up the Sespe River to the Devil's Gate.³² Joe had also resurrected one of Henry Gage's old schemes — to run a pipeline from the wells of Tar Creek and the Little Sespe to Los Angeles. But Dye's biggest plot was a *coup de main* that was neither honest nor brilliant, but possibly not illegal.

Dye owned a claim adjoining the famed Kentuck lease known as "The Oil Spouter." Adjoining the Oil Spouter was open land — that is it was open for filing by anyone. A group of Los Angeles capitalists (Joe called them "tenderfeet sons of bitches") leased Dye's Oil Spouter and then asked his advice concerning the best spot to drill for oil. Joe was only too happy to oblige and staked out a location for what was now the California Oil Company. The Los Angeles crowd had such tender feet that it never occurred to them to have their boundaries surveyed; they simply took the word of fast-draw Dye. But Joe had *deliberately* staked the well site sixteen chains into the open territory. A chain being 66 feet in length, the well, if it proved productive, would be 1056 feet outside of the area Dye had leased to the California Oil Company and could be filed upon by anyone, especially Joe Dye.

And a productive well it proved to be, over 100 barrels per day. The Los Angeles capitalists were delighted until they discovered the truth, then the greenhorn propensities really came out. Instead of immediately filing on the claim, one of their number hunted up Dye and gave him a severe verbal lashing. The latter came back with the usual snarling threats of what Joe's six-shooter would do if there was any trouble about the case. When Joe Dye talked, people listened.

The gunfighter now went to his reliable stooge, Mason Bradfield, and ordered him to file on the claim in the name of Joe Dye. Bradfield replied that he knew the well was on vacant land. Dye told him to never mind what he knew but just do as he was told, that he (Dye) wanted that claim and would "turn the tenderfeet sons of bitches over for it."³³

Bradfield refused. Whereupon Dye became furious: "You do as I tell you; you dance to my music, or I will make it so that you can't stay in the country. You know Haynes (Haines); you know Billie Warren, you remember the son of a bitch in the vineyard. You do as I tell you or I will give you some of the same medicine."³⁴

Bradfield said that he would leave the country before he would do as Joe asked. But Bradfield did not leave the country. Instead he located three claims to cover the well, one in his own name, one for George Henley, and one for a John Thompson, making sixty acres in all. These claims were then transferred to the California Oil Company with Bradfield as superintendent. In exchange for the transfer, the California Oil Company gave Bradfield a deed to a ledge of brownstone on the claim, which Bradfield in turn leased to the Mentone Stone Company of San Bernardino. George Henley also appears to have been involved in this transfer. The *Weekly Free Press* of June 19, 1891, stated that, "Geo. J. Henley and Mason Bradfield are the owners of the brown stone quarry which is leased by Mentone Stone Co."

For at least a month after Bradfield recorded the three claims, Dye remained in ignorance of what had happened. He apparently thought that his flunkie Bradfield had done his bidding and filed and recorded the claim in his name. Then he had occasion to make a trip to the Sespe and was dumbfounded and enraged to discover that a road had been built to the brownstone ledge and men were quarrying rock on what he had supposed was his claim. Joe could not get back to Los Angeles fast enough to find the young man who had outsmarted him.

ONE THREAT TOO MANY

Dye found Bradfield in a jewelry store on Spring Street, where all hell broke loose: "You have thrown me down," yelled Joe. "I gave you a chance to make a stake; to make \$10,000, and you have thrown me down for a lot of tenderfeet son--- of b---. This will cost you your life. I have a mind to kill you right now."³⁵

While Dye was raving, he had his hand on his right hip pocket when suddenly he yelled out, "Don't you draw on me," at the same time striking Bradfield in the face with a gloved hand that contained a piece of broken horseshoe. Carrying a piece of iron in his gloved hand was one of Dye's nastier little habits. Bradfield was unarmed and begged Dye not to shoot him, but the above continued with Joe jabbing him with his pistol and threatening to kill him at once, all the while heaping insults on him and his associates. The terrified owner of the shop fled out the back door; Bradfield never remembered how he made his escape as the first thing he knew he was three blocks away and traveling south at a high rate of speed.

From this time until the fatal 14th of May, Dye played a tantalizing game of cat and mouse with Bradfield. Hardly a day passed that friends of the latter did not tell him of Joe's threats to kill him, undoubtedly when "it was convenient." Bradfield made every attempt to avoid his enemy. When Dye was in Los Angeles, Bradfield would go to the Sespe; when Dye came to the Sespe, Bradfield returned to Los Angeles.

On one occasion Joe sighted Bradfield riding a cable car on First Street and reached for his hip pocket as though to draw his gun. He followed the car for several blocks making threatening motions, but nothing came of it. On other occasions he would follow his quarry home at night but never approached too closely, only harassing.

At this time Bradfield lived on Hope Street. He now decided to move to the New Arlington House, ostensibly on the excuse that it was nearer to the railroad depot. In view of the fact that it was common knowledge that Dye passed the hostelry several times a day, Bradfield's reason for moving

will not bear too close scrutiny; nor will his defense that the shooting was a spontaneous thing which was the result of remembering all the abuse Joe had heaped upon him during the past months.

It was only after Bradfield was in prison that he exposed some of the most vicious traits of Joe Dye. Many were never printed in the newspapers, but three that were will suffice to illustrate the evil in the man.

He revealed how Dye had tried to get him to seduce the daughter of Herman Haines, whom he had shot in Santa Paula, and offered him a new saddle horse if he would "ruin" the girl. He told how Joe wanted him to blow up with dynamite one of the oil company men and had threatened to shoot him if he refused. Dye, he said, had scattered scale bugs in the orchards of his Ventura County enemies, all for revenge. In this respect it is interesting to note that while Dye was in jail for the Haines murder, only the San Jose scale made its appearance in the county. But beginning in 1889, orange trees were being torn out and burned in Bardsdale in an effort to eradicate an infestation of white, and fluted scale. Red scale suddenly began to appear on oranges in the Ventura markets, and cottony scale made its appearance in May. How much Joe Dye had to do with these infestations will never be known. By 1891, farmers were putting pressure on the Board of Supervisors to suppress the importation of trees and plants. It never occurred to them to suppress the importation of Joe Dye.

Mason Bradfield took care of that chore on May 14, 1891, shortly after three p.m.

"Hey, Joe!"

Dye recognized that voice, turned, and reached for his gun. It was too late. The shield of Almighty God was never intended to protect against a double-barreled shotgun. Joe Dye had drawn his six-shooter for the last time.

No flags flew at half-staff for Joe Dye. One old-timer in Los Angeles remarked, "I can say one thing, however, and that is there are a whole lot of people besides mate Bradfield who will rest easier now that he is gone."³⁶

It was estimated that 7,000 people filed through the undertaking rooms of Orr & Sutch to view the earthly remains of Joseph Franklin Dye. They came not to pay their last respects; they came not out of grief or sorrow; they came not even out of curiosity. *They just wanted to be sure that the son of a bitch was dead.*

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ The Los Angeles Times, May 15, 1891.
- ² The Los Angeles Times, May 16, 1891.
- ³ Ventura Weekly Free Press, May 22, 1891.
- ⁴ Los Angeles Times, May 16, 1891.
- ⁵ There are 125 pages of records concerning this case in the Los Angeles County Clerk's office. These quotes and those following are taken from these records.
- ⁶ Ventura Weekly Democrat, July 18, 1891. In reprinting this account, the Democrat gave no credit for authorship. However, the complete article reads, looks, and smells like Allen Kelly, whose book *Bears I Have Met and Others* has more lies per page than any ferry boat commutation ticket ever had holes.
- ⁷ Ventura Weekly Free Press, May 22, 1891.
- ⁸ For a more detailed account of these threats see W. H. Hutchinson's *Oil, Land & Politics*.
- ⁹ Ventura Weekly Free Press, July 24, 1891, p. 5, col. 5
- ¹⁰ Los Angeles Semi-Weekly News, November 30, 1866.
- ¹¹ Los Angeles Semi-Weekly News, April 19, 1867.
- ¹² Los Angeles Star, November 1, 1870.
- ¹³ Los Angeles Star, February 23, 1871.
- ¹⁴ Ventura Weekly Free Press, November 26, 1886.
- ¹⁵ Los Angeles Star, July 30, 1873.
- ¹⁶ All the testimony at this preliminary hearing was resuméd in the Los Angeles Star, August 3, 1873.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Ventura Weekly Free Press, May 8, 1891.
- ²⁰ Ventura Weekly Free Press, July 31, 1891.
- ²¹ Ventura Weekly Free Press, August 20, 1886.
- ²² Unpublished book-length manuscript by Dr. D. W. Mott.
- ²³ The use of the word "Henry" by one newspaper to describe Haines' rifle, and "Winchester" as used by the other is not contradictory. The Winchester Repeating Arms Co. was formed in 1866 for the sole purpose of manufacturing the Henry rifle. It was a popular frontier gun, and the two words of Henry and Winchester were synonymous for all practical purposes.
- ²⁴ In that era "to pass the time of day" meant only to greet; to say, for example, "Good morning."
- ²⁵ Ventura Weekly Free Press, April 16, 1886.
- ²⁶ Ventura Weekly Free Press, September 17, 1886.
- ²⁷ Ventura Weekly Free Press, November 26, 1886.
- ²⁸ Ventura Daily Free Press, March 16, 1887.
- ²⁹ This letter was printed in full in the Ventura Weekly Free Press of November 30, 1888. In Sol Sheridan's *History of Ventura County*, 1926, Vol. I, p. 335, in an article written by E. M. Sheridan, the tale as a whole is illustrative of Sheridan's inaccurate history writing. He claimed that Haines had gone to Dye's home during Dye's absence and tried to "break up his home." He wrote that Haines was unarmed at the time of the murder. He made no mention of Dye's acquittal at his second trial. Crow was never mentioned as the real culprit in the case. Haines as the messenger of notes and letters between Crow and Dye's wife is absent, and on and on *ad infinitum*. The entire story is a miserable piece of pot boiling written

from memory, and a very poor one at that.

³⁰ *Ventura Weekly Free Press*, June 5, 1891.

³¹ Hutchinson, *opus cit.*

³² This article was reprinted in the *Weekly Free Press* on May 8, 1891, just six days prior to Dye's murder.

³³ *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1891.

³⁴ *Ibid.* The murdered man in the vineyard is apparently an unknown Dye murder.

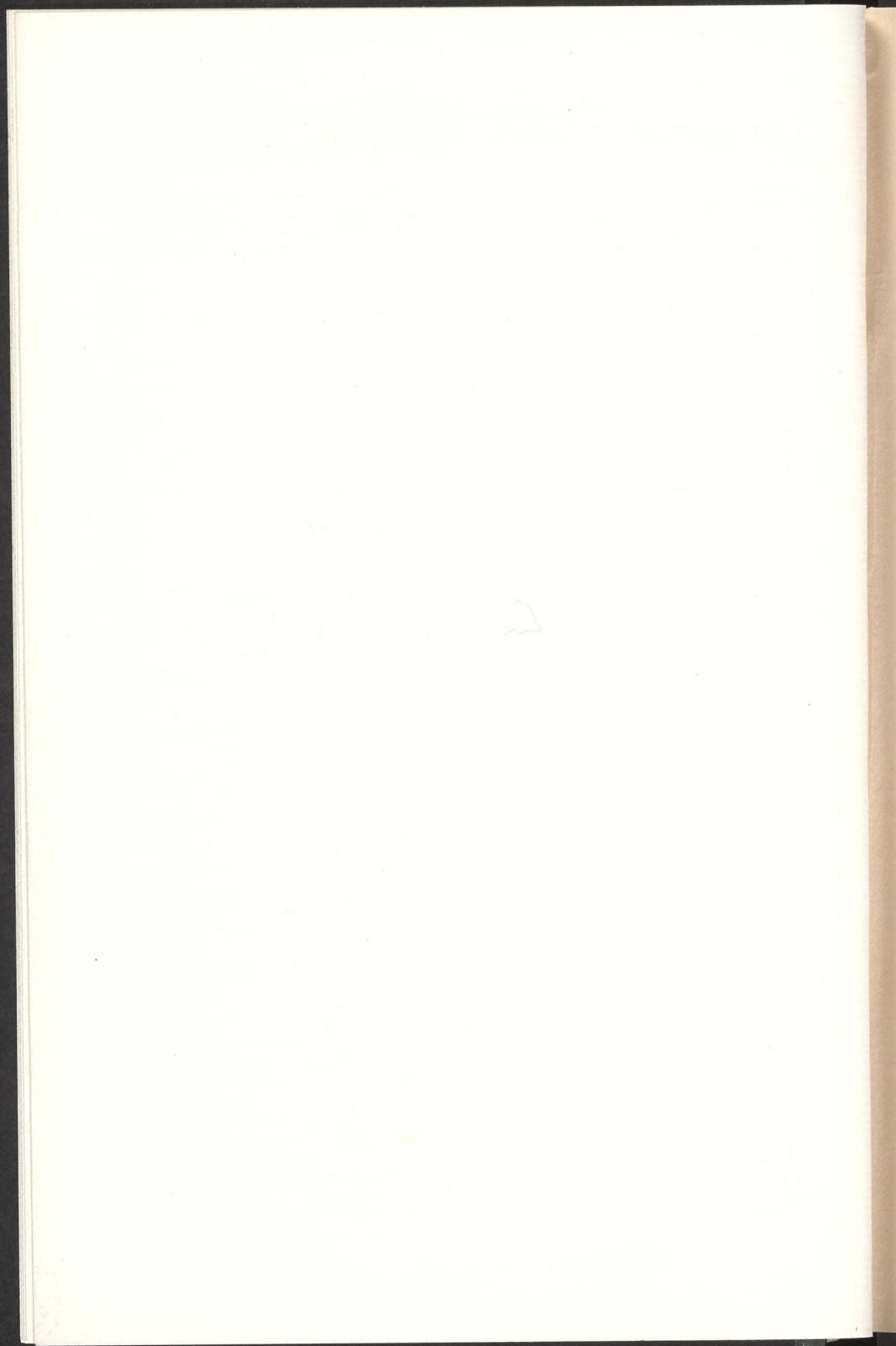
³⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1891.

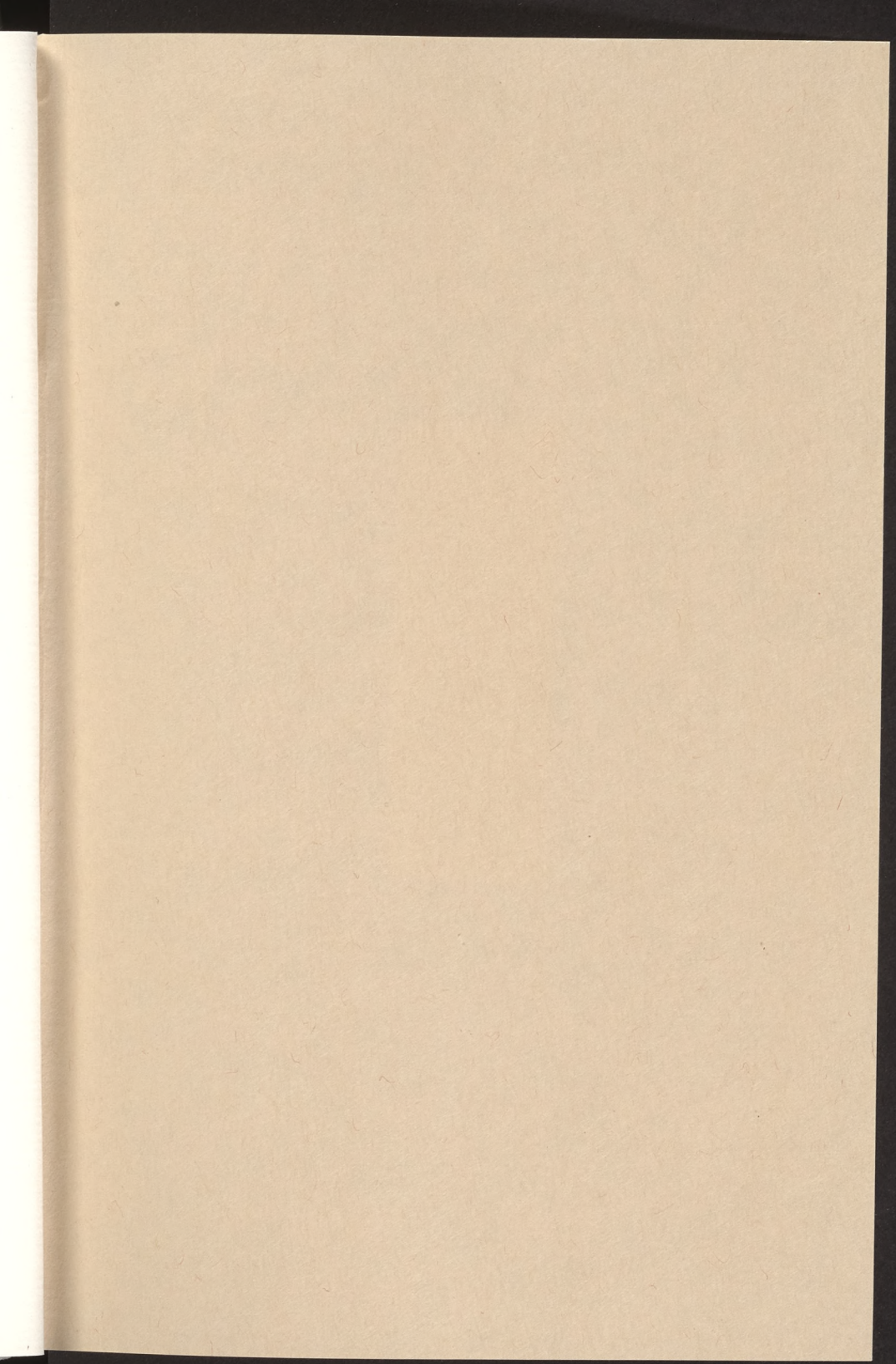
³⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1891.

THESE CHIFFRES SONT EXTRAITS D'UN
TABLEAU DE LA COMMISSION D'ENQUETE
SUR L'ETAT DE LA POPULATION
EN 1906. ILS SONT DONNES
PAR CANTON ET PAR COMMUNE.
LEUR TOTAL EST DE 1.200.000.
LEUR MOYENNE EST DE 1.200.
LEUR MOYENNE EST DE 1.200.

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Angus
 Avenue Hardware
 Mrs. Philip Bard
 Mr. and Mrs. R. V. Barker
 Michael and Joan Barnard
 Mr. and Mrs. Ray Barnard
 Mavis and George Barnhill
 Lyall A. Bjornson, M.D.
 James Boatner
 Mr. and Mrs. John W. Borchard
 Mr. and Mrs. Milton C. Borchard
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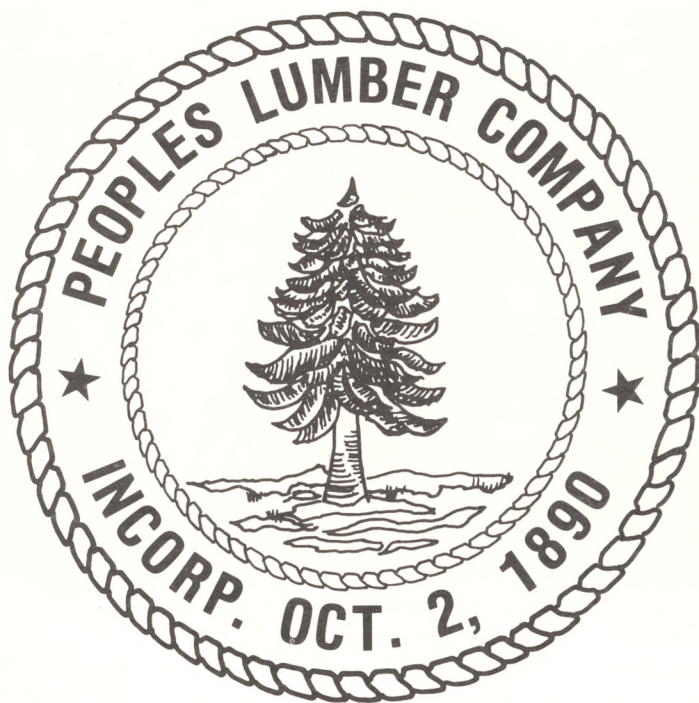
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VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



QUARTERLY

VOLUME THIRTY, NUMBER TWO

WINTER, 1985

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QUARTERLY

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Photographs from the
Ventura County Historical
Society collection.

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME THIRTY, NUMBER TWO WINTER, 1985

About the photographs: Most of the photographs in this issue were found among un-cataloged files from the Peoples Lumber Company in the Research Library at the Ventura County Historical Museum. The identifications in the captions are based on visible evidence and the memories of long-time County residents. Differences of opinion do exist; and corrections or clarifications will be welcomed.

THE PEOPLES LUMBER COMPANY

By Margaret Jennings

Corporations are like people in some ways. They can buy and sell property and services; change their names, addresses, means of livelihood. They pay taxes, make charitable contributions, and get sued. Unlike people, though, successful corporations can "live" forever. There is usually no legal time limit placed on the existence of corporations. Of course, they may simply decide to close their doors, be absorbed by another company, or be killed by competition. Even with the possibility of perpetual existence, most corporations probably don't out-live their original Board of Directors.

A business which can claim that it was *Established 1789* or *1928* or even *1963* seems reliable and trustworthy. We assume it's safe to do business with such a company, and we are inclined to give it our trade. At least once.

Recently I encountered a corporation that was established in 1890. In Ventura. And I was so impressed by those facts (and a few others) that I gave it my trade -- and several weeks of my life in the research and writing of this story.

The Peoples Lumber Company (PLC) was incorporated on October 2, 1890. In the past ninety-five years PLC has expanded, succeeded, struggled, faltered, and, finally, survived through radical reorganization and nearly complete metamorphosis. In its latest incarnation this small, local lumber retailer has become a nationally known and respected investment firm with assets worth over \$13,000,000 and a total capitalization of over \$30,000,000.

Ventura boomed and bustled in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Entrepreneurs of every sort staked their claims in this growing community. The economy and population swelled. Banks, saloons, churches, hotels, and emporiums of all kinds were established and flourished. Residential and commercial construction had to keep pace with this feverish development. And lumber was a big business.

THE EARLY YEARS

1890 was an active year for the establishment of lumber companies in Ventura. The Ventura *Vidette* of February 19, 1890 published the Articles of Incorporation of the Ventura County Lumber Company (VCLC). The Directors were A.J. Salisbury (who subscribed for 800 shares), D.T.

Perkins (280 shares), C.H. McKevevett (280 shares), Henry Manning (240 shares), and R.L. Taylor (400 shares). The only shareholder who was not a Director was C.S. Holmes, who subscribed for 400 shares. This provided start-up capitalization of \$240,000 -- 2,400 shares valued at \$100.00 each.

VCLC lost no time in getting underway. They ran their first advertisement in the *Vidette* on February 24, 1890 announcing that they were conducting business at the Chaffee & Company yard. That yard was located near the northwest corner of Main and Palm Streets in Ventura. Chaffee & Company was, officially, the Chaffee, Gilbert & Bonestel general merchandise and lumber company. An "Important Notice" appeared in the February 26, 1890 *Vidette*: "Chaffee & Co., having sold their entire lumber business to the Ventura County Lumber Company, respectfully request all parties indebted to them to call and settle either by cash or by note within the next sixty days, or account will be placed in the hands of attorney. Call at our store in Ventura. Chaffee, Gilbert & Bonestel."



Lumber yard at Chaffee, Gilbert & Bonestel's. The blur in the left foreground appears to be a horse and buggy.

All went well for the Ventura County Lumber Company -- for a while. The May 29, 1890 *Ventura Free Press* reported that VCLC had opened a second yard. According to that article and the Sanborn-Perris Map of June, 1890, this yard was located in Ventura on Front Street between Chestnut and Fir. On September 6, 1890, they advertised that they had yards in Ventura, Hueneme, Saticoy, Montalvo, Santa Paula, and Nordhoff. By November, 1892, they had established a planing mill in Ventura between Kalorama and Laurel Streets, bordered on the north by Front and on the south by the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks.

But in the second week of September, 1890, a large group of county farmers, dissatisfied with the high price of lumber and generally disgruntled at having to sell at wholesale and buy at retail, met to form the Peoples Lumber Company.

E.M. Sheridan reviewed this 1890 meeting in the February 24, 1926 issue of the *Ventura Post*. "Something like 100 farmers and businessmen met at Collins Hall (rooms above where now is the Ventura Drug Co.)' and set the ball rolling. These people, with those who had subscribed to the stock but were not present, represented about one-third of the wealth of Ventura county, and were individually sound, solid and wealthy citizens, who were ready to unite themselves into a company, as they expressed it, 'for home protection and against exorbitant charges.' Rev. S. Bristol was selected as chairman and J.M. Sharp as secretary."

The *Free Press* reported on October 18, 1890 that, "Over fifty per cent of the stock on the People's Lumber Company was represented at the roll call this morning at Armory Hall. As soon as noses had been counted and a quorum ascertained to be present, an adjournment was taken until 1 p.m. At the afternoon session it is expected to adopt by-laws, and such other business as may appear necessary and proper. With the adoption of the by-laws, as we understand it, the Company will be on the basis of readiness for the conduct of business." There were 136 original incorporators, no one of whom subscribed to more than 2 shares of capital stock. This was truly a co-operative venture. The entire capitalization was \$20,000 with each share being valued at \$100. (Please see Appendix A for a list of subscribers.) The first Board of Directors for the Peoples Lumber



Ventura office -- 1912. From left to right: Jack Kline, unknown, C.E. Bonestel.

Company was comprised of C.D. Bonestel, F.A. Foster, J.M. Sharp, J.B. Robins, G.W. Faulkner, J.R. Willoughby, and F.S. Cook. The Articles of Incorporation were signed and filed on September 30, 1890 -- and the Peoples Lumber Company was in business.

X Throughout the 1890s the Ventura County Lumber Company and Peoples Lumber Company tussled, and by the turn of the century the competition had grown especially fierce. A *Free Press* article (February 7, 1902) summed up the state of relations between them. "The managers of the Ventura and People's Lumber Company have held a conference and as a result the lumber war which has been waged between the two companies for the past year has been called off. Prices on lumber have been extremely low during the past year and the companies have sold at a loss in many instances. The public has reaped the benefit of the war, but the competition has been ruinous." So ruinous had been the war that VCLC soon succumbed to the wounds (possibly self-inflicted) it had suffered. On June 8, 1902, VCLC sold to Peoples Lumber Company for \$12,200.00 in gold coin its holdings in Ventura, Hueneme, and Santa Paula. This property included the major portion of the block bordered by Fir and Ash Streets on the east and west, and Meta (Thompson) and Front Streets on the north and south in Ventura; and, in Santa Paula, most of the block surrounded by Seventh and Eighth Streets on the east and west, and Santa Paula and Santa Barbara Streets on the north and south. The August 1, 1902 *Free Press* reported that, "The People's Lumber Company is now in full control of the lumber business of this county. The final acts in the merging of this company and the Ventura County Lumber Company having taken place Wednesday. The offices of the new company will be in the offices formerly used by the Ventura County Lumber Company, near the wharf at the foot of Fir Street. The two yards in Ventura will be maintained for the present at least, but the yards in Santa Paula and Oxnard will be combined." The article continued with assurances from general manager Watson Bonestel (C.D.'s son) that the public would not suffer from this merger; and that, in fact, prices were being lowered by \$1.00 on "most all kinds of lumber."

But it wasn't long until the competitive void was filled. Before the end of August, 1902, the Ventura Mill And Lumber Company (VMLC) was incorporated. Of the \$50,000 of capital stock available, \$12,700 was initially subscribed. The Directors of this new undertaking were H.A. Giddings, R.H. Teague, R.C. Sudden, D.A. Webster, and F.A. Orton. The Sanborn-Perris maps of December, 1906 and July, 1910 show the VMLC occupying the former site of the VCLC planing mill in the block between Kalorama and Laurel, Front and the Southern Pacific tracks; and an area south of Front/Thompson, north of the tracks, and approximately bordered east and west by what would later become an extension of Ann Street and by the San Jon barranca. But, PLC was securely launched and VMLC was not a serious threat to its prosperity. In fact, on October 31, 1916, those two



Unknown PLC yard office -- circa 1912.

sites, among others, were sold to the Peoples Lumber Company by the Ventura Mill And Lumber Company for \$33,952.00 in cash.

EXPANSION

Even during the years of the Lumber War, PLC was able to grow. The shareholders' faith in the company was shown time and again by their willingness to help the company expand. At a shareholders' meeting held on November 24, 1900 the capital stock was increased from \$20,000 to \$80,000 -- still in units of \$100 each. Of the 200 original voting shares, representatives of 150 shares were present and voted unanimously to increase the capitalization. The company's Directors at that time were C.D. Bonestel, President; J.M. Sharp, Secretary; J.R. Willoughby, F.S. Cook, M.D.L. Todd, William McGuire, and M. McLaughlin.

On June 4, 1902, the shareholders elected to increase the amount of capitalization from \$80,000 to \$200,000. This may have been done in anticipation of the coming competition from Ventura Mill And Lumber. The per share value remained \$100. At this meeting 678 of the 800 shares were present or represented. Only 12 shares were not voted in favor of this increase; the representative of the estate of Jas. Leonard, and D. McGrath chose to not vote their six shares each. There were no votes in opposition. (Please see Appendix B for a list of shareholders.)

The next jump in capitalization occurred on January 27, 1917. The per



Ventura yard -- circa 1912.

share value didn't change -- it was still \$100. The total number of shares went from 2,000 to 4,500 -- representing \$450,000. Also, by this time there had been changes in the Board of Directors -- unfortunately, the records are neither complete nor clear on this matter -- D.T. Perkins was now the Chairman (he was an original incorporator of the Ventura County Lumber Company), J.M. Sharp was still the Secretary, and Adolfo Camarillo, Charles Donlon, and C.A. Lind had joined the Board.²

The capitalization was doubled at the special shareholders' meeting on January 24, 1926 -- from \$450,000 to \$900,000. This was equal to 9,000 shares at \$100 each. Of these 9,000 shares, the largest single holding was 400 shares, and the number of shareholders had grown to nearly 300. The Directors and officers at this time were J.M. Sharp, President; Watson A. Bonestel, Vice President; L.W. Corbett, Adolfo Camarillo, C.C. Perkins, D.A. Smith, Charles Donlon, Richard Bard, and Howard Pressey. H.B. Carver was the Secretary and manager of the Santa Paula yard. Other officers were: C.E. Bonestel, general manager; Roy Myers, assistant manager of the Ventura branch; B. Brown, Ojai manager; W.S. Riley, Oxnard manager, C.F. Reeder, Fillmore manager; R.M. Wright, Santa Susana manager; and J.C. Byrne, Moorpark manager.³

The shareholders were not called upon again to alter the capitalization of Peoples Lumber Company until February 25, 1956. At that time they voted (7,435 aye, 84 nay) to change both the par value of the shares and their number -- from \$100 each to \$10, and from 9,000 to 300,000. By now Adolfo Camarillo was Chairman, and J.C. Crump was Secretary.

There were no further changes in the capitalization of PLC. But through the years there were other alterations to the original Articles of Incorporation.

The Second Part of the original Articles had read, "That the purposes for which it is formed are to carry on and conduct, in Ventura County, California, a general lumber business and to buy and sell and manufacture all kinds of lumber and building material." On July 14, 1915, that part was amended by the addition of this paragraph: "To hold, purchase or otherwise acquire, to sell, assign, transfer, mortgage, pledge or otherwise dispose of shares of the capital stock, bonds, or other evidence of indebtedness of other corporations, and while the holder of such stock to exercise all the right (sic) and privileges of ownership thereof, including the right to vote the same, to the extent as a natural person might or could do." I think PLC must have hired a lawyer.

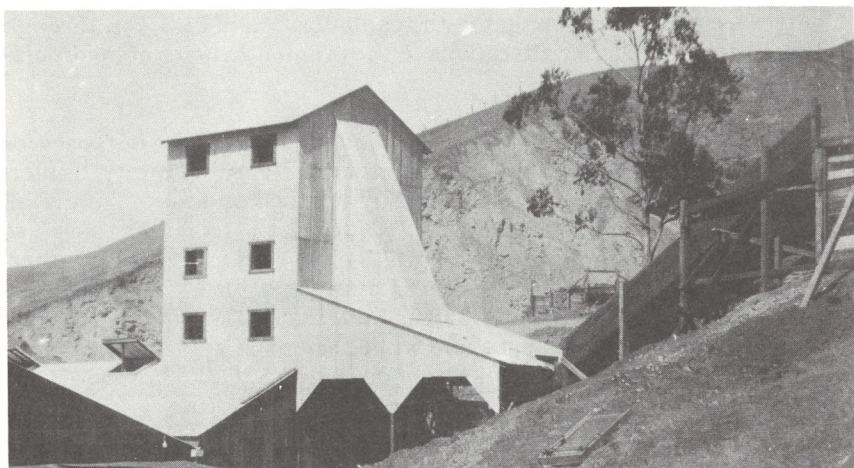
On February 28, 1948, the shareholders amended the Fourth Part of the Articles from "That the term for which said Corporation is to exist is fifty years, from and after the date of its incorporation." to "The period of the existence and the duration of the life of the Corporation shall be perpetual." Maybe they fired the lawyer. Or hired a better one.

The most significant change in the Articles took place on February 27, 1960 when an amendment was created to specifically allow "...buying, selling...dealing in...real and personal property of all kinds..." Of the 135,000 represented shares entitled to vote on this amendment, 106,097 favored it. This approval opened the way for the next step in PLC's history--the selling-off of the lumber business and the serious plunge into real estate investing.

NEW NAMES, NEW GAMES

Several factors combined to promote the profitability of PLC during its first sixty years. Soon after its organization, the company began to expand its retail lumber yard operations into Oxnard, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Ojai, Moorpark, and Santa Susana. By March, 1926, it had moved its brick and tile manufacturing plant from the yard facing onto Front Street between Laurel and Ann to Ventura Avenue; and it had established planing mills in Ventura, Oxnard, and Santa Paula.⁴ In 1952 it added another retail yard in Camarillo; and a wholesale building materials branch was established in Ventura in 1949.

In those early years PLC had a virtual monopoly on the county's lumber business. The volume of construction and the quality of transportation discouraged external, i.e. Los Angeles-based, competition. The Directors



Ventura Avenue brick and tile plant.

were major shareholders knowledgeable about the business. And the general manager, Ben W. Bartels, had spent all his professional life working for PLC.

But in the early 1950s PLC found itself unable to fight off the aggressive competition that improved transportation and the introduction of tract housing brought to the county. Their facilities were obsolete and they didn't understand (or couldn't practice) modern merchandising techniques. In the years between 1951 and 1957 county building permits increased 68%, population increased 38%, PLC's competitors increased their sales 54% -- and the Peoples Lumber Company's sales decreased 8%.⁵

Going from a slip to a slide, in 1960 PLC showed a loss of \$354,000; and in January and February of 1961 it lost \$52,700 on its lumber operations. The Directors had prepared themselves to jettison the lumber business as early as 1959. At a special Board of Directors meeting held on October 9, 1959, it was "...suggested that the Company's Articles of Incorporation should be amended to broaden the authorized scope of the Company's business, with particular reference to ownership and management of rental property."⁶ After conducting surveys and studies and considering myriad solutions, the Directors and shareholders decided to sell the lumber business.

When Homer Burnaby's company, Sun Lumber, bought Peoples Lumber Company in 1961 it acquired the lumber and building material inventories, the equipment, furniture and fixtures, authority to lease the

retail yards in Ventura, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Camarillo and rent the Ventura wholesale yard, capital stock in the Ventura County Wholesale Supply Company (a wholly owned subsidiary of PLC), and the name *Peoples Lumber Company*. The remaining assets of the company -- land and buildings -- were kept by the Anacapa Corporation, which was formed when the original Peoples Lumber Company changed its name by notifying the California Secretary of State on March 20, 1961. The Anacapa Corporation was created expressly to manage real estate investments.

BUY LAND. THEY AIN'T MAKIN' ANY MORE OF IT.

Peoples Lumber Company had, from its inception, "invested" in real estate. They owned their lumber yards in Ventura, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Ojai, Moorpark, Santa Susana, Camarillo, and Montalvo; plus other commercial property in downtown Ventura. Then, in the Depression, they acquired additional properties through foreclosures. A.A. Milligan, a longtime Director of PLC and its successors, described that process; "The lumber company in the early 1930s or late '20s financed the building of a number of single-family residences primarily...in Ventura. And a lot of the people who bought those couldn't pay for them in the middle of the Depression. And the Peoples Lumber Company had to repossess them."⁷

According to Mr. Milligan, the company underwrote the construction of these houses in an effort to sell more lumber. The loans were, in the strictest sense, promotional.

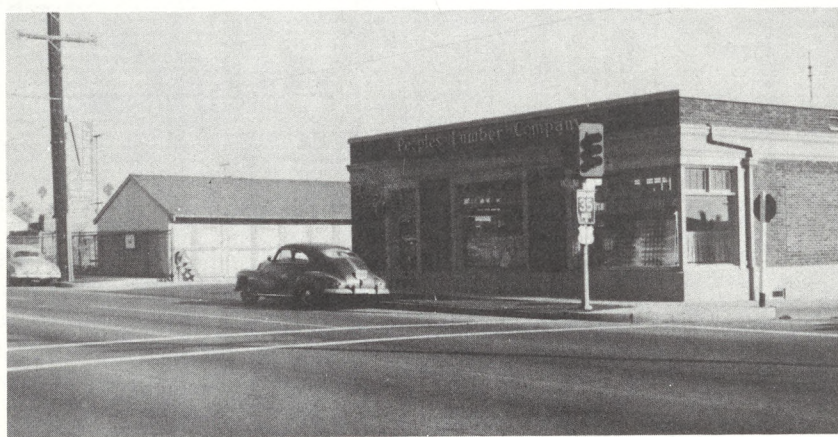


Fillmore yard -- circa 1930.

In 1932 PLC owned real estate and real estate contracts with a net book value of \$334,157.89 -- exclusive of the lumber yards and other plant property. But, in the mind of its management, PLC was a lumber company, not a landlord. So, through the 1930s and 1940s the company divested itself of this property. By 1939 the net book value of its real estate acquired by foreclosure had been reduced to \$163,856.26. PLC's financial records from the 1940s detail the pace of this sell-off. As of December 31, 1940, the company still had equity interests in at least sixty properties. (Please see Appendix D for a partial list of those properties.)

In 1941, three improved parcels in Ventura and three in Santa Paula were sold for \$15,901.11. Some vacant lots in Hueneme, and 456 Cedar Street, 1958 Vista Del Mar, and 449-457 S. Hurst in Ventura were sold in 1942. PLC sold the Cecil Hotel in Ventura, a trailer court and part of Block A in Oxnard, the Sheehan and Citizens properties in Santa Paula, a hotel in Fillmore, and assorted other unspecified lots and equities in 1943. The Barr Building in Ventura went in 1944, as did more of Block A in Oxnard, the Value property in Santa Paula, and the Clark property in Ojai. By the end of 1945 the company owned only its yard and plant properties, three vacant lots, and houses rented to employees. The value of the lots and employee rentals was \$4,049.66. In terms of real estate, Peoples Lumber Company was more or less back where it started.

In the 1950s the company concentrated on the lumber business and let its few remaining real estate investments, such as they were, float along. They did hire Verne A. Baker to appraise the land they owned in the county. His reports, prepared in December, 1955 and October, 1958, provide locations of the properties and their fair market values.⁸



Main Ventura yard, corner of Meta (Thompson) and Fir Streets -- October, 1958.

In Ventura

The Main Yard. 708 E. Meta Street (now known as Thompson Boulevard). Located on the south side of Meta, bounded on the west by Fir Street, on the east by Ash Street, and on the south by Front Street, excluding the northeast corner. Appraised value: 1955 = \$126,000. 1958 = \$205,500.

The West Yard. Located on Front Street, between Chestnut and Fir Streets, adjoined an alley on the north. Appraised value: 1955 = \$51,000. 1958 = \$96,000.

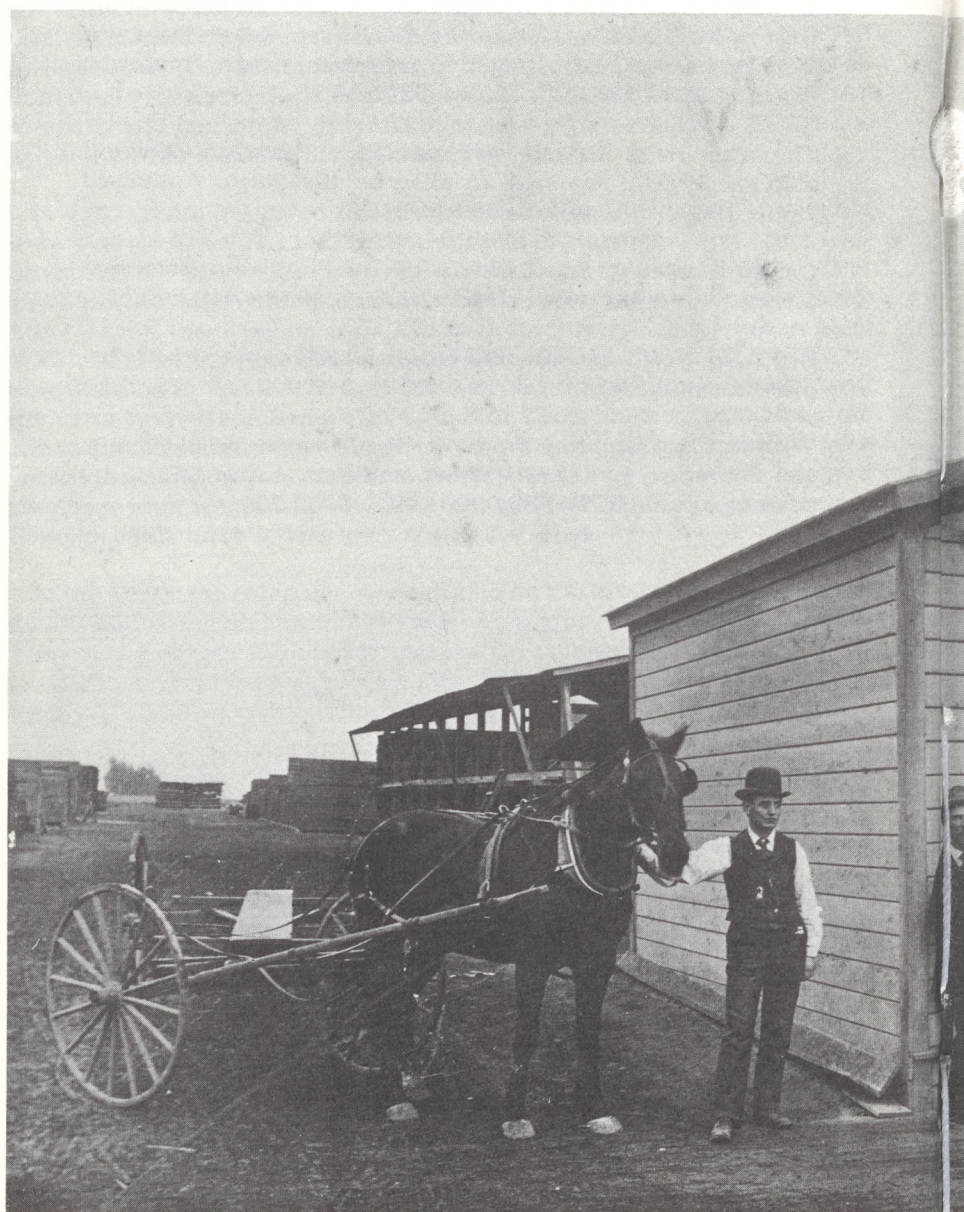
Garage Property. Southeast corner of Front and Kalorama Streets. Appraised value: 1955 = \$6,500. 1958 = \$10,600.

Dry Yard. Northeast corner of Front and Kalorama Streets. Appraised value: 1955 = \$22,000. 1958 = \$40,000.

Warren Tire Company Property. Southeast corner of Thompson Boulevard and Laurel Street, and east of Ann Street. Appraised value: 1955 = \$86,000. 1958 = \$105,200.



Site of main Ventura yard -- November, 1984.



Ventura yard. From left to right: William House



son, Watson A. Bonestel, unknown, C.E. Bonestel.

Citizens Yard. 1132 Thompson Boulevard. Located at the junction of Front Street and Thompson Boulevard. Appraised value: 1955 = \$100,000. 1958 = \$110,877.

Branch Yards

Oxnard Yard. 1051 South A Street. The west side of A Street, north of the railroad spur on Wooley Road. Appraised value: 1955 = \$174,000. 1958 = \$311,200.

Santa Paula Yard. 216 North 8th Street. Located on the west side of 8th Street, ran through to 7th Street on the west. The railroad tracks were the boundary on the east. Appraised value: 1955 = \$52,500. 1958 = \$60,000.

Fillmore Yard. 527 Santa Clara. Located on the north side of Santa Clara, extended northerly to the railroad tracks. Appraised value: 1955 = \$38,000. 1958 = \$40,000.

Ojai Yard. 108 South Montgomery Street. Located on the east side of Montgomery Street, a short distance from Ojai Avenue. Appraised value: 1955 = \$18,000. 1958 = \$18,000.

Moorpark Yard. 12 South Moorpark Avenue. Located on the east side of Moorpark Avenue, just south of the railroad right-of-way. Appraised value: 1955 = \$10,000. 1958 = \$10,000.

Santa Susana Yard. Located on the east side of Tapo Street, it was the first property north of the railroad track. Appraised value: 1955 = \$13,000. 1958 = \$10,000.

Camarillo Yard. 2800 Barry Drive. Located at the southwest corner of Somis Road and Barry Drive. Appraised value: 1955 = \$35,000. 1958 = \$35,000.

Montalvo Yard. Located at the easterly end of First Street, adjoining the railroad tracks at the north. Appraised value: 1955 = \$33,000. 1958 = \$38,000.

These appraised PLC properties provided the nucleus for the Anacapa Corporation. The Ventura County tax records for 1961-62 show that Anacapa owned sixteen parcels. In 1962-63 Anacapa paid taxes on twenty parcels in Ventura County, and in 1964-65 it was twenty-two parcels. In the years 1966 through 1969 the number of parcels remained constant at twenty-four.

THE TRUST

In 1962, Anacapa's gross income from its property leasing operations and investments was \$169,000. In 1963, it passed the \$200,000 mark. But by 1964, tax considerations, including the exhaustion of the lumber operation's operating loss carry-forward, began to offset annual increases in gross income.

The solution to this taxing problem was to dissolve the Anacapa Corporation and create in its place the Anacapa Trust. A real estate investment trust is less rigorously taxed by the IRS than is a corporation. As A.A. Milligan recalls, "In 1968 when the law was changed to allow for the tax treatment of a real estate investment trust we saw that we were -- and Ray Willson brought this to us---a perfect example of a company that is qualified to operate this way. And this became a great benefit to the shareholders because it eliminated the double taxation of corporate and private; because you pass through the income to the shareholders."⁹

This change of name and structure took place on December 31, 1968. The Trust's purpose was "...to invest and re-invest in real estate, interests in real estate, leasehold interests, mortgages and interests in mortgages secured by real estate."¹⁰

The first Trustees and Agents of the Trust were those same men who had been Directors and officers of the Anacapa Corporation. They were: A.A. Milligan, Robert E. Martin, Robert G. Dallman, Richard B. Gould, Robert D. Willis, and Ray Willson (Executive Agent) and Edwin Duval (Secretary). Two men who had recently been on the Board of the Corporation but were not affiliated with the Trust were Rodney H. Smith who died in December, 1968, and H.S. Anderson who resigned in February, 1969.¹¹

The balance sheet for the Anacapa Trust dated March 31, 1969 shows \$2,048,300 in total assets, and \$1,531,531 in shareholders' equity. The transition from Corporation to Trust was clearly a wise and profitable one.

THE BIG TIME

On December 31, 1969, the Trust adopted the name it is known by today, the Real Estate Investment Trust of California (REIT-CAL). Mr. Milligan tells about that name change. "The reason we changed the name as I recall was that Anacapa, we figured, was not that marketable and it was that regional. We didn't know where we were going to end up, and we glommed on, if you will, to the name Real Estate Investment Trust of California. I think again that Ray Willson was responsible for that name."¹²

Within one year, REIT-CAL had filed with the Securities And Exchange Commission for its first stock rights offering. Immediately prior to the offering the Trust had approximately 350 shareholders and 112,249 shares outstanding.¹³ By August, 1984, there were 748 shareholders and 863,000 shares.¹⁴ The present Directors and Officers of the Trust are: A.A. Milligan, Chairman of the Board, President and Trustee; William A. Walters, Jr., Executive Vice President and Trustee; Ben E. Nordman, Vice President and General Counsel; Robert E. Martin, Vice President and Trustee; LeRoy E. Carlson, Secretary and Treasurer; Robert G. Dallman, Trustee; Willard DeGroot, Trustee; Marshall Milligan, Trustee; and Robert D. Willis, Trustee.

In August, 1984, additional shares in REIT-CAL were offered for sale in its first underwritten stock offering and were approved for quotation on NASDAQ, the national over-the-counter stock market. The prospectus for this offering listed seventeen properties owned by REIT-CAL as of June 30, 1984. Of these, thirteen are in Ventura County.

THE SEARCH

I began this research project when I learned, through reading the Trust's August 23, 1984 prospectus, that the company in which I was considering investing was the corporate successor to a company organized in 1890. And because most of the Trust's properties were in Ventura County, and because I recognized some long-established Ventura County names, i.e. Milligan, Willis, and Nordman among others, I felt that this



Santa Paula yard -- October, 1958.

company might have its roots in this county. So I set out to satisfy my curiosity about REIT-CAL's corporate grandparent. As I prowled deeper and deeper into the stacks at the E.P. Foster branch of the Ventura County Public Library and the Research Library at the Ventura County Historical Museum I became more sure that the story of the Peoples Lumber Company and the Anacapa Corporation/Trust was worth telling. And I began to suspect that some of the properties owned by REIT-CAL were heirlooms from PLC. When I moved my search over to the County Recorder's and Assessor's offices, I found what I had hoped for: Proof that some of the parcels had been owned continuously since the earliest days of the Company's expansion.

On October 19, 1898, the Hund family -- Fred, Maggie, John, Clara, and Helena -- sold to the Peoples Lumber Company for \$3675.00 in gold coin their property in Block 17 in the Eastern Addition of the Town of San Buenaventura.¹⁵ This is the block bordered by Laurel and Ann Streets on the east and west, and by Thompson Boulevard and Front Street on the north and south. PLC made bricks here at the turn of the century. In Mr. Baker's appraisal reports it was known as the Warren Tire Company property. Today it is occupied by a General Tire outlet, Holiday Vinyl Tops, and an R.E. Barber used car lot.

Two other pieces of property now owned by REIT-CAL came into the "family" on June 8, 1902 when the Ventura County Lumber Company sold out to PLC.¹⁶ The parcel in Ventura constitutes a ma-



Site of the Santa Paula yard -- November, 1984.

por portion of the block between Fir and Ash, and Thompson and Front. This old lumber yard is now the site of a Vagabond Motel. And in Santa Paula, on an irregularly shaped parcel between Seventh and Eighth, and Santa Paula and Santa Barbara Streets there are now a number of commercial structures and an apartment complex where at least three separate lumber companies -- Santa Paula Lumber, Ventura County Lumber, and Peoples Lumber -- once stood and served the homeowners, merchants, and farmers of that community.

CONTINUITY

The connection these properties provide between the Peoples Lumber Company of 80-plus years ago and the modern Real Estate Investment Trust of California is really of no great importance. But I like to remember that history is a continuum. History never stops and, maybe, never starts. What is important, I think, is the sense of perspective that continuity can give you. When I now stand at the intersection of Front and Laurel Streets I can feel a personal tie to the owners, employees, and customers of the Peoples Lumber Company of 1898. I'm just like them in some very fundamental, human ways. And I like to be reminded of that. I think we need to be reminded of that. I happen to be telling the story of a commercial enterprise, but if the basis of this tale were in religion, education, politics -- any endeavor at all -- it would still be a human story. And humans seek for continuity; for a sense of belonging that stretches beyond our own span. This little company grown large, *Established 1890*, has given me that.



Directors and officers of the Peoples Lumber Company. This photo was taken in the main Ventura office in February, 1938. Clockwise starting at far left: unknown, unknown, Herbert H. Eastwood, C.A. Lind, Mr. Corbett, William Houston, Milton Teague, C.E. Bonestel, unknown, Adolfo Camarillo.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Now on this site is Franky's Restaurant and Rains Shoes in the Realty Building -- 456 and 466 East Main, respectively.
- ² According to *The Evolution of Anacapa Trust, Predecessor of the Real Estate Investment Trust of California*, an unpublished manuscript by Ray Willson (1969, Ventura County Historical Society Research Library), Lind had joined the Board in 1911 and remained a Director until his death in December, 1958. There is some disagreement between Willson's manuscript and the amended Articles of Incorporation and Minutes from this and subsequent meetings. Please see APPENDIX C for the list of changes in the Board taken from Willson's manuscript.
- ³ Taken from a newspaper advertisement published on March 15, 1926, by-lined Oliver North.
- ⁴ Ibid; and the Sanborn-Perris maps of San Buenaventura, dated December, 1906 and July 1910.
- ⁵ Op cit., Willson's manuscript
- ⁶ Minutes of the Peoples Lumber Company Board Meeting, October 9, 1959.
- ⁷ Oral History interview of A.A. Milligan, conducted on October 17, 1984.
- ⁸ Appraisal reports prepared for Peoples Lumber Company by Verne A. Baker in December, 1955 and October, 1958.
- ⁹ Op cit. Milligan interview
- ¹⁰ Op cit. Willson's manuscript
- ¹¹ Ibid
- ¹² Op cit. Milligan interview
- ¹³ Real Estate Investment Trust of California prospectus, dated December 24, 1970.
- ¹⁴ Real Estate Investment Trust of California prospectus, dated August 23, 1984.
- ¹⁵ Ventura County Recorder's Office, Deeds, Book 57, Page 68
- ¹⁶ Ventura County Recorder's Office, Deeds, Book 84, Page 439

APPENDIX A

The following is the list of the original shareholders of the Peoples Lumber Company and the number of shares to which they subscribed.

Easley Reppy	2	Lewis Walker	2
F.A. Foster	2	R.H. Olmsted	1
B.W. Dudley	2	K.P. Grant	1
J.H. Orcutt	1	J.Q. Alexander	1
R. Wilkin	1	M. Wason	2
W.H. Bradley	1	W.S. Chaffee	2
J.B. Robins	1	W.A. Bonestel	2
R.G. Pardee	1	Theo. A. Kelsey	1
Robert Strathearn	2	J.D. Morgan	1
J.E. Robins	2	Josiah Keene	2
William Pirie	1	E.E. Gerry	1
F.C. Foster	2	E.E. Dunning	1
M. Fagan	1	Samuel Hill	2
Benj. F. Maddox	2	Wm. Sexton	2
Geo. E. Stewart	1	S. Bristol	2
C.H. Sheldon	2	J.M. Sharp	1
F.J. Beckwith	1	Daniel Gilger	2
W.D. Wright	1	A.E. Greenfield	2
Thomas Bell	2	A.M. Hedrick	1
C.N. Kimball	1	James Walker	1
T.B. Gosnell	1	W.F. Willoughby	2
T.G. Morrison	1	J.R. Willoughby	2
D. Darling	2	James Evans	2
Donald Frazer	2	Tyler Bither	1
G.W. Chrisman	2	John Hund, Jr.	2
Jakob Maulhardt	2	Thomas A. Rice	2
G.E. Kaltmeyer	2	H.M. Stiles	2
I.W. Wolfe	1	A.D. Barnard	2
P.K. Miller	1	A. Price	1
G.W. Faulkner	1	Leroy Arnold	2
John Pinkerton	1	J.K. Gries	2
O.T. Hawley	1	C.J. Thacker	1
W.P. Granger & Son	2	J.E. Borchard	2
M. Stewart	1	M.D.L. Todd	2
H.W. Baker	1	J.B. Alvord	2
Robert Ayers	2	C.T. Meredith	1
E.S. Hall	2	Robert Bell	1
F.W. Baker	1	John Rice	1
S.T. Wells	2	E.H. Jennings	1
Thomas Clark	2	J.C. Hartman	1
James Ward	2	John Cawelti	2
F.S. Cook	2	J.R. Bennett	1
Thomas Brannon	2	Richard Robinson	2
G.T. Hill	2	Peter McMillan	1
H.G. Bennison	1	John G. Hill	2
A.A. Van Curen	1	Crane Bros.	1
Daniel Smith	1	Wm. McGuire	2
John Mears	1	Antoine Revelon	1
J.K. Myers	2	G.M. Richardson	1
W.O. Hara	1	C. Harpold	1

APPENDIX A

(continued)

Thomas Cloyne	2
John Scarlett	2
James Leonard	2
M. McLaughlin	2
James Clay	1
M.S. Overmire	1
L.E. Mercer	2
J.F. Cummings	2
W.C. Richmond	1
S.A. Guiberson	1
E.E. Moore	1
Leonard Skinner	1
F.M. White	1
A. Woolever	2
John McKenna	1
W.E. Balcom	1
William Brock	1
Geo. F. Sewell	1

L. Linebarger	1
Abner Haines	1
Aratus Everett	2
Justin Petit	1
M.J. Laurent	2
H.F. Clark	1
Mrs. Nellie N. Sheldon	2
T.W. Sturgis	2
M. Flynn	1
H.J. Dennison	1
J.L. Crane	2
C.D. Bonestel	2
D.S. Blackburn	2
Joseph Hobart	1
E.P. Zimmerman	1
Thomas Barrows	1
D. McGrath	1

APPENDIX B

The following is a list of shareholders (and number of shares) voting to increase the capitalization of the Peoples Lumber Company from 80,000 to 200,000 shares. This vote was taken at a shareholders' meeting held on June 4, 1902.

D.S. Blackburn	11
Estate of A.D. Barnard	6
Chas. Barnard	5
F.W. Baker	3
Mrs. A.M. Baker	3
Mrs. M.J. Baker	3
C.G. Bartlett	15
Thos. Brannon	6
Mrs. Susie Brannon	4
W.H. Bradley	6
A. Bernheim	4
Mrs. F. Bernheim	6
Hortense Bernheim	2
Monroe Bernheim	2
Thos. Bell	6
F.J. Beckwith	3
J.F. Bishop	2
Miss Mary A. Bishop	2
C.D. Bonestel	33
W.A. Bonestel	40
C.E. Bonestel	5
A.F. Bonestel	3
Mrs. M.A. Bonestel	2
Miss I. Boucher	4
Miss T. Boucher	4
Mrs. Jessie T. Brown	2
Wm. Brock	3
J.E. Borchard	6

Thos. Clark	6
G.G. Crane	12
F.A. Crampton	6
E.M. Cleavland	1
L.W. Corbett	3
F.S. Cook	6
Mrs. F.S. Cook	6
Wm. M. Cook	3
Emma Cook	3
Stella Cook	3
Thos. Cloyne	6
J.S. Collins	3
J.F. Cummings	6
J.B. Dawley	3
H.J. Dennison	3
E.E. Dunning	12
W.A. Dunning	4
Mrs. W.A. Dunning	3
Geo. Dennis	2
A. Everett	6
G.W. Faulkner	3
Jas. Fox	2
M. Fagan	8
Mrs. H. Fagan	1
J.K. Gries	6
F. Griffin	8
Z.E. Goodyear	1
Thos. Gould	5

APPENDIX B (continued)

Mrs. Ella Gabbert	2
H. Guggenheim	5
Z. Graham	6
E.S. Hall	21
Mrs. R. Hall	4
L. Harzfeldt	5
Thos. Harwood	2
J.C. Hartman	3
C.E. Healey	12
Sam'l Hill	6
G.T. Hill	5
Miss G.L. Hobart	3
Jno. Irwin	2
D.A. Kelly	5
C.N. Kimball	3
Mrs. F.E. Lee	5
Mrs. H.B. Leavitt	3
Zittie E. Little	1
M. McLaughlin	4
T.F. McLaughlin	2
Mercer Bros.	2
Jno. Mears	3
Jno. W. Mears	2
Wm. McGuire	6
Thos. Mitchell	6
Miss Minnie Mitchell	3
C.J. Millard	1
Wm. M. Moultrie	5
Mrs. E. Moultrie	2
T.G. Morrison	6
G.F. Nowak	1
E. Nichalls	3
O. Orr	15
Mrs. Mary Owens	8
J.M. Owens	1
Justin Petit	3
Wm. Pirie	3

A. Pirie	1
Mrs. G.C. Power	6
Miss Helen Power	2
T.A. Rice	6
Mrs. M.F. Rice	2
R.F. Robertson	5
T.W. Sturgis	6
Estate of Jno. Scarlett	6
Mrs. N. Sheldon	12
Mrs. E.R. Sewell	3
J.M. Sharp	20
D. Smith	4
Miss Clara Smith	1
Mrs. D. Smith	1
R.P. Strathearn	6
C.L. Sheldon	6
Lloyd Selby	3
Louis Spader	6
H. Schwartz	10
D. Schwartz	2
Jos. Sexton	2
F.J. Sifford	5
J.M. Specht	1
J.C. Strong	4
M.D.L. Todd	6
Mrs. Dora Todd	2
J.R. Willoughby	4
L. Walker	6
Jas. Walker	2
J.A. Walker	6
W.D. Wright	6
A. Woolever	6
W.R.H. Weldon	6
J.E. Whalen	2
B. Whittan	2
J.H. Warring	2
C.W. West	5

The following shareholders were absent from the June 4, 1902 meeting and their shares were not voted.

R. Atmore	1
Miss Hallie Atmore	1
C.L. Bard	7
Mrs. Maggie Bard	6
Ches. Carden	2
A.B. Comstock	2
J.F. Comstock	2
Mrs. M.K. Cowelti (sic)	6
Chas. Farrand	2

Hugh Henry	1
G.E. Kaltmeyer	6
T.A. Kelsey	3
L.G. Maulhardt, Adm'r	6
Estate of Jno. Meiners	3
C.H. McKevelt	4
Jas. Milligan	3
Mrs. E. McDevitt	1
P.K. Miller	3

J. Feraud	2	E.E. Moore	3
D. Gilger	4	Wm. J. Pinkerton	3
T.B. Gosnell	2	J.H. Priestly	1
Ida Gosnell	2	Mrs. Susan Priestly	2
Mrs. Caroline Gosnell	1	A.G. Poplin	2
E. Grainger	2	Mrs. Mary W. Robinson	6
P.J. Grogan	3	W.C. Richmond	3
Mrs. Charlotte Haines	1	Estate of Wm. Sexton	6
C. Harpold	4	J.E. Smith	5
Mrs. J.W. Hammons	3	R.C. Sudden	5
Miss Maud Henderson	1	Mrs. W.H. Welshman	2

APPENDIX C

The following is a list of changes in the Board of Directors taken from Ray Willson's manuscript.

DIRECTOR	TERM OF SERVICE
Adolfo Camarillo	1907 - July, 1958 (Resigned)
A.J. Dingeman	1939 - Sept., 1963 (Died)
J.C. Crump	1947 - Nov., 1957 (Died)
H.H. Eastwood	1935 - Feb., 1957 (Died)
C.A. Lind	1911 - Dec., 1958 (Died)
C.E. Bonestel	1897 - April, 1956 (Died)
H.S. Corbett	1940 - Feb., 1955 (Resigned)
L.D. Willis	1955 - May, 1966 (Died)
E.M. Blanchard	1956 - Nov., 1962 (Resigned)
A.A. Milligan	1957 - Currently serving
R.B. Gould	1958 - Aug., 1983 (Resigned)
R.G. Dallman	1959 - Currently serving
R.E. Martin	1959 - Currently serving
R.D. Willis	1963 - Currently serving
R.H. Smith	1964 - Dec., 1968 (Died)
H.S. Anderson	1966 - Feb., 1969 (Resigned)

APPENDIX D

The following is a partial list of properties owned by PLC as of December 31, 1940. This information is taken from the company's financial records.

IN VENTURA -- PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND RENTERS

- 1) Cecil Hotel and stores / 3 rentals
- 2) Vacant lot / Pierpont Bay
- 3) 2037 Thompson Boulevard -- Barr's Bakery
- 4) 260 W. Prospect -- Adrian Irwin
- 5) Lot 30 / subdivision R
- 6) Vacant lots / E. Ramona St.
- 7) Vacant lot / 1280 E. Poli

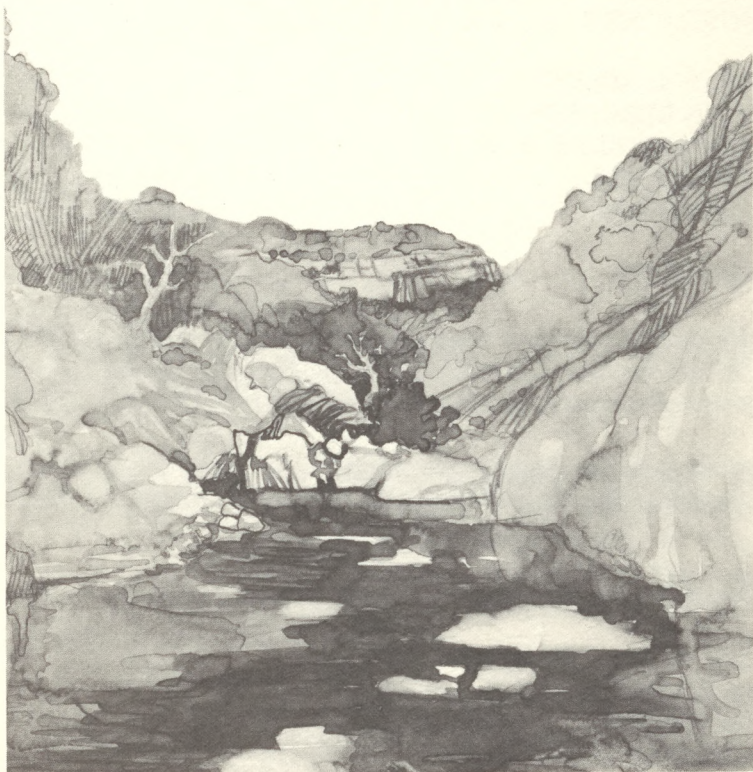
2

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Angus	Zoella Marriott
Avenue Hardware	Louise Marsh
Mrs. Philip Bard	Mr. and Mrs. Edwin J. Marshall II
Mr. and Mrs. R. V. Barker	Mr. and Mrs. Albert C. Martin
Michael and Joan Barnard	Mr. and Mrs. William J. Mason
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Barnard	Edward and Florence Maulhardt
Mavis and George Barnhill	Mary W. Maxwell
Lyall A. Bjornson, M.D.	Mrs. Ted Mayr
James Boatner	Mr. and Mrs. Owens Miller
Mr. and Mrs. John W. Borchard	Capt. and Mrs. R. N. Miller III
Mr. and Mrs. Milton C. Borchard	A. A. Milligan
James L. and Martha J. Brock	Reese L. Milner
Mr. and Mrs. Reginald A. Burnham	Beryl Dunning Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin L. Carty	Margaret Murphy
Mary A. Cohen	Mary E. C. Murphy
Del Norte Foods, Inc.	Robert E. Naumann
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin J. Diedrich	Mr. and Mrs. John V. Newman
Mr. and Mrs. Milton Diedrich	Ben E. Nordman
Mrs. Margaret P. Donlon	Mr. and Mrs. Romualdo Ochoa
Nazarene E. Donlon	Mr. and Mrs. Francis Petit
Douglas Penfield School	Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Petit
Mrs. Harold K. Dudley	Renee Canet Pezzi
Jane E. Duncan	Mr. Richard Quint
Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Eastwood	Mr. and Mrs. Leon Reiman
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. S. Everett	Mrs. Donald D. Roff
Mrs. Walter J. Fourt	Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Russell III
Dr. William J. Fox	Sattler's Furniture & Upholstery
Marjorie A. Fraser	Mrs. Walter Scholtz
Mr. and Mrs. John B. Friedrich	Schulze News Company, Inc.
R. W. Fulkerson Hardware	Mrs. Reginald Shand
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Garrett	Mr. and Mrs. Lester T. Shiells
Getty Oil Co.	Dr. and Mrs. Fred A. Shore
Mr. Herbert C. Gould	Barbara B. Smith
Katherine H. Haley	Bob Smith Oil Co.
Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Hambleton, Jr.	Dr. Helen M. Smith
Ruth N. Hammond	Mr. and Mrs. Ralph E. Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Haneberg	Charles A. Smolt, M.D.
John F. Henning	Harold V. Spencler
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wm. Hoffman	Mrs. Floyd J. Swift
Helene Holve	Mr. and Mrs. Milton M. Teague
Mrs. C. Richard Hughes	Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dana Teague
Isensee Floorcovering, Inc.	Mr. and Mrs. Joe A. Terry
Carmen Camarillo Jones	Mary E. Thille
Bill and Elise Kearney	Mr. and Mrs. Ord Toomey
Anne Lefever Kroecker	Union Oil Co.
David Adolfo Lamb	Harry Valentine
John Burket Lamb	Melba N. Vanoni
Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Lamb	Ventura County Star-Free Press
Robert B. Lamb III	Ventura Knights of Columbus
Mrs. R. C. Lefever	Vetco Offshore Industries, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Lefever	Viola, Inc.
Bank of A. Levy	Weiss Global Enterprises
Sheridan A. Logan	Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Willett
McAvoy-Ventura Copr.	Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Willis
Eulialea McMullen	Mr. and Mrs. John Wilson
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Maring	Cynthia Wood
	Mr. and Mrs. Dorriell B. Wright

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THE
VENTURA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
QUARTERLY



The Sespe

*The Silent hills are singin';
Singin' songs of mortal strife;*

*The pines are tellin' stories,
Gruesome tales they tell of life.*

VOL. 30, NO. 3

SPRING 1985

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The *Quarterly* is produced under the auspices of the Publications Committee:

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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Gunsmoke On Central Avenue:

The Mason Bradfield-George Henley ShootingPage 3
by Charles F. Outland

Cover illustration by Leslie Clark.
The view is from Devil's Gate looking up Sespe Creek to George Henley's mineral claim (the brownstone outcropping at center of divide).

Cover quotation from Frank Felt's
Songs of the Sespe.

Photographs from the Ventura County Historical Museum collection unless otherwise indicated.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: December 11, 1984, Charles F. Outland was declared "Official Historian of Ventura County" by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Outland, a second generation Santa Paula native, has devoted his life to researching and recording the history of Ventura County. He was a founding member of the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board and charter member of the Ventura County Historical Society, serving as first editor of the *Quarterly* (1955-1964). In 1980, he received national recognition for his contributions to the history of Ventura County with the award presented him by the American Association for State and Local History. His publications include:

Man-Made Disaster: The Story of St. Francis Dam (1963, 1977),

Ho For California: The Faulkner Letters (1964),

Mines, Murders and Grizzlies: Tales of California's Ventura Back Country (1969),

Stagecoaching on El Camino Real (1973).

GUNSMOKE ON CENTRAL AVENUE

The Mason Bradfield-George Henley Shooting

by Charles F. Outland

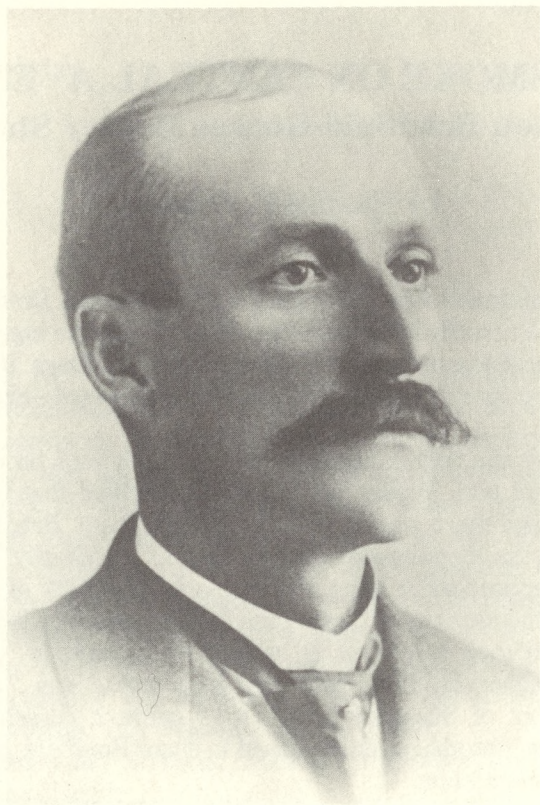
If all the old-timers who claim they saw the famous Bradfield-Henley shooting in 1915 actually witnessed that affair, it was the biggest crowd to be seen on Central Avenue prior to Fillmore's Festival Days. Paradoxically, each will tell you that the street was practically deserted—except for himself, of course.

Nor was this the only inconsistency in this ludicrous bit of Sespe gun play. At the trial both Henley and Bradfield testified that they were on friendly terms and there was no enmity between them. Bradfield did concede that when the shooting started, "he was not so friendly."¹ Since they were both under oath while lying like sin, each was guilty of perjury. The judge knew it, the jury knew it, everyone in Fillmore knew it and everyone in the courtroom knew it; and yet, no one had the temerity to "call" either of these Sespe roughnecks. What both men were saying was, "If you people will just stay out of this alley brawl, we'll settle it ourselves." In Los Angeles, Henley's brother even promised to shoot Bradfield, and no one so much as discouraged him.

In direct contradiction to his early testimony, Bradfield maintained that any ill-feelings between the two began in 1913. There are, however, strong indications of friction as early as 1894, a fact that requires investigation into the backgrounds of both men. It will turn out to be an inquiry involving Sespe oil, brownstone quarrying, Sespe Light & Power Company, roads and the right to use them, and even who could go fishing in the finest stream in southern California.

Darwin Mason Bradfield's legal introduction into the records of the Sespe came when he registered to vote on September 25, 1886. He gave his age as twenty-four, his place of birth as Virginia, and his occupation as painter. If Bradfield ever painted anything other than Commercial Street in Los Angeles and Fillmore's Central Avenue blood red, the fact has been lost with age.

George John Henley came to the Sespe in 1887. When he registered to vote on September 10, 1892, he gave his age as thirty-five, his hair as brown, and listed no visible scars. A photograph of George with hair of any



George Henley

color would be a rare collector's item. As for scars, Mason Bradfield would take care of that deficiency twenty-three years later.

A far more valuable historical document respecting Henley is an undated resumé of his life written by his daughter, Clara May Turley.² George was the oldest of seven children born to Phillip and Christiana Henley, German immigrants living in New Jersey. The family was originally Von Hoehnen, but the children's names were changed to Henley in the United States. Of particular interest is the fact that the elder Henley was a stonemason and owner of a brownstone quarry in New Jersey. His son, who would make Sespe brownstone famous, was thus well versed in stonemasonry at an early age. As his daughter put it: "My father was brought up in stone."³ (In later years many were the Sespe fishermen who would fervently wish that Henley would turn to stone!)

Henley, for his time, was also an extremely well educated man academically speaking, being particularly proficient in geology, languages, and ancient history. One has only to read the lengthy essay entitled, "The Undeveloped Water Resources of Ventura County"⁴ delivered in the 1906 Farmers' Institute to appreciate the depth of his knowledge of geology. At one point in his address Henley noted wryly: "Nature is always doing something." Perhaps that is where the saints and sinners of the Sespe copied the idea.

For eight years after leaving college Henley roamed the West acting as a law enforcement officer, prospecting for gold in Arizona and New Mexico while dodging Apaches, superintending a mine in Mexico, placer mining on the Fraser River in British Columbia, and even attempting to farm in that cold and damp province. It was while engaged in this latter discouraging enterprise that George received a letter from his brother Phillip in Fillmore telling of an outcropping of brownstone of superlative quality in the Sespe mountains. In those pre-cement days fine quality brownstone spelled g-o-l-d to Henley. He left at once for the new town of Fillmore.

Henley not only found a huge deposit of fine brownstone on government land which he located and filed on, he also discovered that the Sespe River bed was a veritable brownstone quarry in itself. For years George dressed the ledge of brown sandstone and the Sespe River product and shipped it over the far reaches of the west. In later years the rock from the river bed was used almost exclusively.

Henley's was a mineral claim, not a homestead. Still the government required that a certain amount of work be done and improvements made in order to hold title to the land. Only George Henley could have thought up the "improvement" that followed. The site still bears the name associated with it.

At that time the honey industry was a relatively extensive business in Ventura County, so large in fact that a plant to manufacture five-gallon honey cans was soon operating in Ventura. Henley bought up a supply of honey cans, cut and flattened them at Brownstone, and carried them to the flat north of Coldwater Canyon and below the brownstone outcrop. Here he built his improvement, a tepee constructed of honey cans. Since no self-respecting Chumash Indian ever built or used a tepee, the name "Tepee Flat" must be confusing to students of the local Indians. But it was shelter for Henley, although one cannot but wonder how it would have sounded inside in an old-fashioned Sespe hail and thunder storm. The structure was known to have been there as late as 1910.

By November 1887, the newly arrived railroad was laying a siding on the west side of the Sespe River for the loading and shipping of Sespe

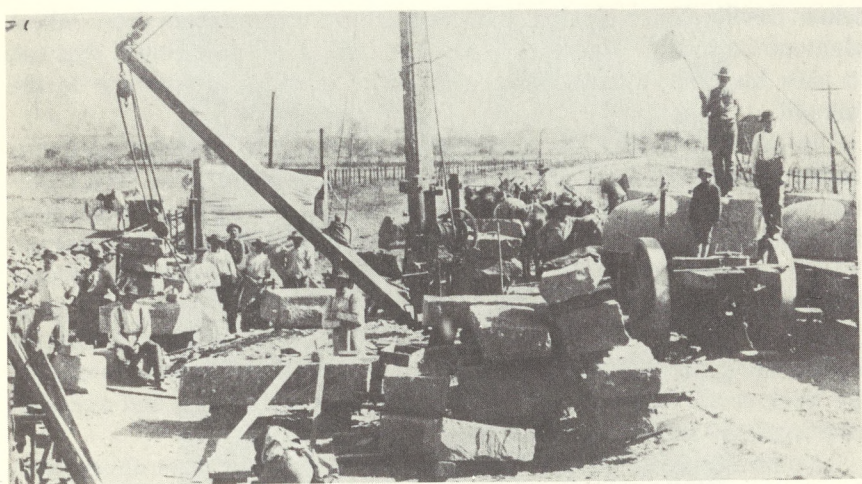


"The Stairway." Sespe riverbed source of brownstone, George Henley at center.

brownstone. The Sespe correspondent to the *Ventura Free Press* could report on December 13, 1887, that rock quarrying was "progressing": bunk houses and a boarding house had been completed, and the railroad siding was ready for use. Thus came into being the station and spur of Brownstone.

At some time during his early quarrying operation, Henley's path must have crossed that of Bradfield. It is a safe presumption, also, that he made the "acquaintance" of badman Joe Dye after that individual was released on bail prior to his second trial in 1888. Dye would have found Henley a far different character than those he was used to bullying and pushing around. George had dodged too many Apaches to be terrified of the likes of Joseph Franklin Dye and his bulldozing six-shooter.

The early association of Henley and Bradfield is obscured by the mists of time. The best evidence and deductions are that Bradfield worked closely with George during those early brownstone shipping years. Nowhere else could he have learned the art of splitting and dressing rock except from the master stonemason himself. Just why he moved to Los Angeles, or where his wife and child were in 1891 at the time of the Dye murder are unknown factors. The fact that Bradfield named Henley as one of the three claimants of the oil lands prior to the Dye assassination is reason enough to believe that at this time the two men were on friendly terms. This conclusion is further reinforced by the fact that both men were involved in leasing



Brownstone Spur

the brownstone outcropping above Razzle Dazzle Gulch to the Mentone Stone Company of San Bernardino.

This company entered into quarrying in earnest, installing cutting saws and loading derricks at Brownstone spur. During periods of heavy orders, in excess of fifty men were employed which required the construction of a mess hall and bunk houses for their care.

During this period George Henley was also quarrying brownstone in direct competition with the company to which he and Bradfield had leased the outcropping above Razzle Dazzle Gulch. Here was a development that made friction almost inevitable. If anything was lacking, it was supplied when Bradfield went to work for Mentone as supervisor of the men cutting stone at the quarry and loading the huge blocks for transportation to Brownstone Spur. Henley's reaction to his partner working for the competition can well be imagined.

Originally the company had used wagons lowered by cable to descend to the floor of the Sespe River and the road. Several serious accidents occurred which resulted in the construction of an inclined tramway to lower the stones. They were then transferred to heavy wagons for hauling to Brownstone.

The road in those days did not follow the west bank of the river. Rather, it went up what is now Grand Avenue to approximately the Swallow's Nest, crossed the river to the east side, and remained on the left bank around the Big S curve of the Sespe and recrossed to the right bank

below Devil's Gate. Henley, who was quarrying upstream from where Mentone Company's tramway descended at Razzle Dazzle Gulch, thus had to pass his competitor's outlet point when hauling brownstone to the railroad.

In February 1894, George and William Henley were supplying a contractor at the San Bernardino Insane Asylum with brownstone. The superintendent of Mentone in an attempt to block the Henleys' outlet extended the tramway across the road. A mere tramway across his path was not enough to stop Henley and he got his load to the Brownstone spur and on to a flat car. "But the Henley's [sic] big rival did not propose to let it go at that, so sued out an attachment on the rock in the court of Los Angeles, for a claim against Phil Henley, a brother, who it is claimed is not interested in the work at all."⁵ The car was cut out of the train at Piru and unloaded awaiting legal action.

No further news of this delightful little Sespe brawl ever appeared in the *Free Press*, although that paper said that "further developments are anxiously looked for. . . ." With Bradfield collaborating with his rivals in the fracas, it isn't too difficult to imagine Henley's feelings toward his "friend." In 1915, reference would be found to friction between the two men "years ago."

It is possible that the Henley-Mentone Company feud never reached a court of law, but was settled by a tempestuous outburst from old Jupiter Pluvius. Only those familiar with the temper of the Sespe will believe what happened. A cloudburst of unbelievable proportions had struck the quarry. Not a splinter of Mason Bradfield's barn was to be found; the entire quarry was left a complete wreck; the tramway, which was the key to the operation, was nothing but splintered and twisted rail sent smashing to the floor of the canyon. For the next seventy-five years ranchers and stockmen would cut the rail and use it for fence posts following its exposure after floods.

It is possible that the Mentone Company had nearly exhausted the usable brownstone at the site and the deluge had buried any remaining rock. State geological maps of today that pinpoint various formations do not show brownstone on the old Mentone quarry site. Never again would the company operate on the Sespe, although it wasn't until 1901 that it sent a Mr. McGilliard to dismantle and ship to Los Angeles the elaborate stone saws and machinery at Brownstone Spur "that have lain idle for so many years."⁶

All the while George Henley continued to quarry out the Sespe River and supply brownstone to western builders. As late as 1906, Henley was attempting to form a company to supply the rebuilding needs of San Fran-



Brownstone—the Finished Product—George Henley's House.

cisco. Brownstone, according to George, was the only masonry that withstood the heat of the great fire. But cement had been rapidly replacing rock for construction purposes; the days of brownstone fame were past.

Meanwhile, what of the wily Mason Bradfield? His employers' business had been annihilated. His barn and presumably the living quarters of his family were wrecked. Further, his giving aid and comfort to Henley's business rivals had undoubtedly resulted in the alienation of any affections that George might still have for Mason. Bradfield moved to Fillmore and opened a saloon that was homogenized with oil deals and politics, particularly with the man who was soon to be Governor of California, Henry T. Gage.

There is no more bewildering or intriguing story concerning the Sespe than this Gage-Bradfield friendship. Gage had been one of the attorneys to free Joe Dye at his second trial for the murder of Herman Haines. Bradfield was the man who killed Dye in cold blood in Los Angeles; and yet here was the California governor-elect coming to Fillmore as the guest of the killer of his former client.

According to the *Ventura Free Press* of December 16, 1898, the men were on a hunting expedition in the mountains north of Fillmore. It is more

probable that Gage was inspecting oil holdings, while at the same time briefing Bradfield on the upcoming plans of the Southern Pacific crowd to elect Daniel M. Burns as the successor of Stephen White to the United States Senate. It is also possible that the unstable Bradfield was making the opening moves in a "salted" oil land scheme that would leave his friend Gage holding an empty barrel.

Politically, Governor Gage was in the pocket of "The Octopus," that infamous Southern Pacific gang that had held the state in its grasp in past years. The Espee had selected Dan Burns (notorious for his malfeasance in office as California Secretary of State, his acquittal on graft charges as San Francisco's "boss," and who was prominently identified with the state's sporting and saloon circles) to be California's next United States Senator. With this in mind, consider the following news item in the *Free Press* of January 27, 1899, just five weeks after that "hunting trip" with Bradfield: "Mr. Bradfield still prolongs his stay at the State Capital. Mason is rendering what assistance he can toward the election of an honest and capable Senator to represent our best interests at Washington."

This was the same Mason Bradfield who eight years earlier had hidden behind the curtains of a second story window and shot Joe Dye in cold blood. Now he was in Sacramento, obviously aided and abetted by the governor of California, to "render assistance" to the legislature in electing a United States senator! Just what Governor Gage thought Bradfield could do, except act as an errand boy, is inconceivable. Bradfield would remain in the capital until May, except for two brief visits with his family.

Early in May he returned to Fillmore and sold his saloon to J. Lagomarsino. There is nothing to indicate that he returned to Sacramento to render further assistance to the legislature. There are, however, strong indications that the hunting expedition with Governor-elect Gage six months earlier was made by Bradfield to render assistance unto himself.

On November 3, 1899, the Ventura *Free Press* reprinted an article from the Los Angeles *Phoenix* which stated: "The saloons in Honolulu, H.I., are doing well. One saloon man from Fillmore, Ventura county, Cal., is there. His name is Mason Bradfield. He left in such a hurry that he forgot to pay five dollars which he owes The Phoenix for subscriptions."

The answer to why Mason left town in such a hurry *may* have been revealed by this item in the *Free Press* two weeks later: "Governor Henry T. Gage and Asst. State Mineralogist arrived here from the north on Sunday and were driven into the hills back of the Sespe. They were looking over the oil property in which Gov. Gage is personally interested."⁷

For once Mason Bradfield was not there to act a host for the governor. That Gage was using taxpayers' money to check his personal property,



*Mason Bradfield, On Trial for Shooting Joe Dye
(as Sketched in L.A. TIMES, May 15, 1891). See
Quarterly, Fall, 1984.*

while obvious, is immaterial at this moment. On January 19, 1900, the *Free Press* announced the arrival of W. L. Watts, assistant in the field to the state mineralogist. Watts came prepared with a full scale camping outfit and proceeded into the Sespe "to pursue his investigations in that section." What those investigations consisted of were more or less revealed by the Los Angeles *Herald* when it reported on "salted" oil lands in Ventura County.⁸

Two weeks prior to that December 1898 hunting trip with Bradfield, Gage was listed as the grantee of a mining claim in the Devils Gate Petroleum Mining District. The grantors were two strangers from Los Angeles who had all the earmarks of being "dummy" entries. The evidence would suggest that Bradfield had "pulled a fast one" of some type on the governor. The latter's position would have prohibited any complaints.

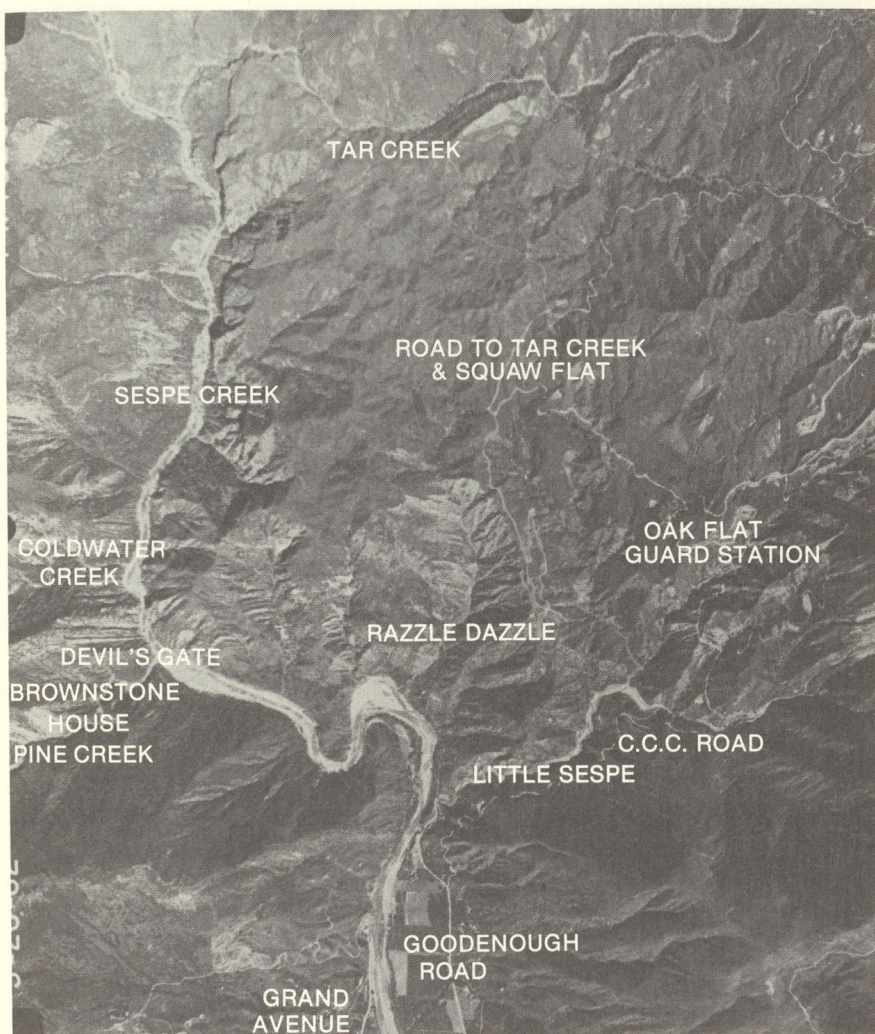
When Bradfield returned from the sands of Waikiki beach, his future residence would be in Los Angeles. From time to time newspapers noted his presence in the county to look after his oil interests, but he more often than not was registered at the Rose Hotel in Ventura.

With one exception, it was not until the incorporation of Sespe Light & Power Company in 1913, Mason Bradfield, President, that Bradfield again became a frequent visitor in Fillmore. That one exception is important. The Big Sespe Oil Company, a corporation formed in 1901,⁹ was accused of conspiring with one A. F. Johns of seizing oil lands in the Big Sespe Oil District and placing "Mason Bradfield, alleged to be a noted gun-fighter on the property"¹⁰ to prevent the plaintiffs from taking possession. The *Free Press* editor apparently considered that shooting man from ambush made one a noted gun-fighter instead of a sniveling coward.

The importance of the Big Sespe Oil Company lies in the fact that it built the first road worthy of the name on the west bank of the Sespe River from the end of Grand Avenue to Henley's Camp at Coldwater Canyon. Manager A. F. Johns stated that there was "a road of sorts" when the company built its road,¹¹ but the principal route up the canyon was still utilizing the east bank and the dual crossing of the river. Johns also disclosed that George Henley had worked for a week on the new road, but all labor and materials were paid for by the Big Sespe Oil Company. It was this road, added to a few indiscreet threats by Henley, plus the overly imaginative and at times unstable brain of Mason Bradfield burning a short fuse that would eventually lead to Fillmore's most famous early day shooting.

Whether Henley was in any way involved in the Big Sespe Oil Company is unclear. His name does not appear among the corporate organizers or officers. His daughter in writing the resumé of his life does mention Henley being involved in drilling two unsuccessful wells at a claim called Tar Hole, one and one-half miles above Coldwater Canyon. The issue is unimportant. The crux of the events that were to follow was Henley's putting a gate across that westside road, hiring two big thugs as guards, and charging a fee for hunters and fishermen to pass, usually to camp on his property. Much of this area was formerly the patented land of the late Joe Dye. (Joe was late on the draw!) Many Sespe old-timers claim George charged Cadillacs five dollars and Model-T fords fifty cents to go through. One wag suggested that the Internal Revenue Service first conceived the graduated income tax from Henley's charges at the gate.

Henley and his camp proved to be popular with Los Angeles sportsmen. It was also a very sharp thorn in the side of local hunters and fishermen who felt they had a perfect right to trespass through George's property to reach their favorite hunting areas and fishing holes.



Courtesy Pacific Western Aerial Surveys

Aerial Photo of Sespe Creek Area.

This conflict was further exacerbated by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors setting the opening date of trout season on April 1, one month earlier than Los Angeles County. This had been an ongoing and bitter dispute between Ventura County sportsmen and resort owners for years, with the latter favoring the earlier date because of the increased revenue

generated by Los Angeles anglers. The Los Angeles *Times* put it in typical Los Angeles perspective (there was more influence in money than in the confessional):

"The Isaac Waltons of Los Angeles have got on the nerves of the Ventura County fishermen. Because the latter will seek at the next session of the Legislature to have the Sespe River closed to fishing for a period of years, a call has been issued to Los Angeles anglers to strike for their rights and seek to defeat the bill.

"Attorney J. P. Hogan received a communication yesterday from Geo. J. Hanley [sic], whose hospitality many Angelenos will remember with pleasure, in which the northern man seeks to unite opposition to the bill. . .

"The Ventura people claim that fishermen from this city get the bulk of the fish. Angelenos say that the money they spend on fishing trips more than offsets this."¹²

The proposed legislation died an ignominious death, but the feelings of the Sespe and Fillmore sportsmen toward Henley became more bitter and would come back to haunt George at Bradfield's trial.

A more realistic if somewhat facetious article more nearly represented the local sportsmen's view toward Henley's gate:

There are trout in the Sespe River near Henley's Camp. But to fish, motorists had best comply with the formalities or solemn and sundry things may happen.

Mr. and Mrs. Kreps and Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Bull who composed a party drove to the camp in an Oakland touring car, discovered what the requisites are and brought the information back. "We were complacent and willing to submit to all demands so had no trouble," said Kreps in describing the outing.

According to the Oakland party the public road beyond Fillmore is in poor condition. About six miles out it begins to improve, but a huge gate intercepts travel. Two huskies are camping on the site and the gate is not opened unless \$2 is deposited. "It's a case of come through or walk the river," said Kreps. Kreps added that he'd hate to "go up there looking for a fracas."¹³

Kreps was right about one thing: If it was trouble you were hunting, there was no closed season in the Sespe. Whether an Oakland touring car rated a two dollar fee as against fifty cents for a Model-T Ford might be considered argumentative.

The conflict between Henley and local sportsmen would eventually reach a climax when the latter began circulating a petition protesting George's application for a patent to certain Sespe lands. Henley would blame Mason Bradfield for that scheme. But the blow that almost killed Henley was the incorporation of the Sespe Light & Power Company in 1913 with Mason Bradfield as president.



Henley's Camp. George Henley second from left.

No one could ever accuse Bradfield of lacking ambitions with his Sespe Light & Power Company. The plans called for no less than five dams on the Sespe and six on Piru Creek for the storage of water for electric power generation and later sale to farmers for irrigation.¹⁴ Only two things stood in the way of this grandiose project so far as Sespe River was concerned: slightly over \$3,600,000 and that infernal gate of George Henley's across the only road into the dam sites. George proposed to charge every car, pack mule, or anything else (including balloons) carrying supplies up the canyon.

The affair was further strained by George telling employees of Sespe Light & Power that he and Bradfield were enemies and that anyone who worked for Bradfield was an enemy also. As for Bradfield, Henley said, "He would not let that ——— go over the road unless he paid the same as other people paying to go up there."¹⁵

Mrs. Henley aggravated the deteriorating affair still further by telling a Mrs. Booth that if Bradfield came up the canyon her husband would fill him full of holes.¹⁶ Mrs. Booth did not consider the information classified.

These and similar threats were relayed to Bradfield who took them literally and did not go near the Sespe. All work done by Sespe Light &

Power in the canyon was performed by employees and subordinates, with Bradfield remaining at a discreet distance from Henley's "tollgate."

Late in March 1915, the company brought suit against Henley, asking the Superior Court for a restraining order to prevent George from blocking Sespe Light & Power Company's access to the west side road. The action was successful, but Bradfield still refused to inspect the work in person. At this point it would appear that Henley had learned something from Joe Dye, to wit: Mason Bradfield was severely lacking in backbone and intestinal fortitude, and could be made to dance to the music of anyone making threats against him. But Henley had not learned that this was also as dangerous as cranking a Model-T Ford with the spark lever pulled down, or jabbing a rattler with a toothpick.

On the morning of July 1, 1915, George Henley should have stayed in bed. The day began badly when he got into a fuss with two campers, Mr. and Mrs. Akroyd, who refused to pay an additional \$2.50 to stay another day. Henley threatened to have them arrested if they didn't pay the price. Akroyd was not one to be stampeded and refused. Later he would testify that George was in a foul mood and much excited when he left for Fillmore.

In addition to his infamous tollgate, Henley had become somewhat noted for his bald head, the derby hat he wore to cover up the hairless pate, and his habit of always dressing in his best suit when going to town. The Sunday-go-to-meeting outfit was usually downgraded somewhat by stains on his shirt from tobacco juice ejected windward. Thus prepared George set out for town and his unsuspected rendezvous with Fillmore history.

On Central Avenue just south of the bank and on the back of the lot was the real estate office of E. W. McCampbell. Sharing the building with McCampbell was the office of Mason Bradfield and the Sespe Light & Power Company. On the west side of Central and a bit farther down the street was the barber shop of Max Chancer. This was the stage for the shooting, but the stage setting was about the only thing everyone could agree upon. The following account is based upon the sworn testimony of numerous witnesses, including the shooter and the shootee, and eyewitness accounts of those still living.

Bradfield was sitting in a car with E. L. Booth, *zanjero* for Fillmore Irrigation District, when Henley walked past and spoke to both men. Booth responded but Bradfield did not. Booth asked Mason if he and Henley weren't speaking. Bradfield replied that there was no reason why they shouldn't.

Strangely, only Booth related and testified to this pre-shooting exchange; all others had Bradfield coming out of the office and confronting Henley. Booth's account cannot be discarded lightly. There would be no

reason for the man to make up such a story. But the fact remains that both Henley and Bradfield failed to mention this encounter in their testimony. As "openers" for those interested in this unknown prelude to the shooting, the writer offers this suggestion:

Bradfield had arrived in Fillmore carrying his six-shooter as was his custom. But a heavy gun is not the most comfortable article to have on one's person while sitting at a desk in the office. Bradfield removed it. Booth came into Sepse Light & Power to discuss some type of business which the men did not care to have Miss Booth, secretary, overhear. They adjourned to Booth's car parked on Central Avenue, where the previously described exchange with Henley took place. George strolled on down the street, while Bradfield went back to the office to get his gun, and Booth continued on his way. Henley now turned and walked back and saw Bradfield standing in the doorway of McCampbell's office. According to Henley, Bradfield approached and stopped.

Henley: "How are you getting along with the survey?"

Bradfield: "All right."

Henley: "Where are you surveying?"

Bradfield: "Up on the Hartman place."¹⁷

At this time Henley saw a "bad look" in Bradfield's eyes. George turned away for a moment only to look back into Bradfield's six-shooter.

"Are you heeled?" Bradfield asked.

Henley replied that he was unarmed, and turned to walk away. Bradfield now opened fire as Henley started to run diagonally across Central Avenue toward the barber shop. The first shot plucked his coat; the second went through his left shoulder and pierced the collarbone. The Haase boys on their way to the barber shop heard Bradfield yell: "Won't that son of a bitch ever fall?" The third shot dropped Henley with a hole through his right shoulder. George fell near a hitching post in front of the barber shop. Bradfield, thinking that he had killed his man, walked calmly back to McCampbell's office. When his victim fell, all the pent-up hatred for Henley had been released like the breaking of a tightly wound spring.

It was to be expected that Bradfield's version of the shooting would differ drastically from that of Henley. Mason charged that George always carried a gun in the waistband of his trousers, and often carried up his sleeve a knife made from an old file. Once Bradfield's imagination began to spin, there was always the possibility it would explode from sheer centrifugal force. He now testified how he had seen Henley practicing throwing that knife and shooting his pistol at targets. He recalled all the threats that different parties had told him Henley had made and how he meant to do him bodily harm.

On the day in question Bradfield made no mention of sitting in the car with Booth and the exchanges of greetings between Booth and Henley. Rather, he charged that Henley kept pacing back and forth in front of McCampbell's office beckoning him to come out. He finally did and asked George what he wanted. The latter asked him why he didn't come up the canyon, and Bradfield replied that he didn't care to go because of what he had heard. Having stated earlier that he had not been up the Sespe since 1913, it should be obvious that he could not have seen Henley shooting, or throwing a knife at targets.

Bradfield charged that at this time George called him a dirty name by accusing him of being the ——— who was preventing him from getting the patents on his land. By now Bradfield's imagination was really spinning. He thought he saw the hilt of a gun in Henley's trousers as the latter turned. Imagining that his enemy was going to draw, Bradfield started shooting, but only to cripple, mind you. Both shots that hit penetrated through the back of Henley's coat.

By now Bradfield's fantasies were flying apart. He even saw Henley's gun in the hands of barber Max Chancer after George fell. Further testimony brought out the fact that Henley was unarmed. He was not carrying a gun and was not in the habit of doing so. He had no knife up his sleeve. He had deliberately turned away from Bradfield to avoid trouble, which was probably the worst thing he could have done. To the hallucinating mind of Bradfield it was a gesture of scorn that squeezed the trigger of his gun.

The actions of the townspeople and of Mason Bradfield immediately following the shooting are intriguing and revealing. Bradfield surrendered his gun to Town Marshal Owen Miller, who handed it back to the would-be killer! Bradfield would deny this at the trial, but several people had witnessed the episode. Further, when Sheriff McMartin took him into custody, Bradfield was still carying the gun.

McMartin had been called soon after the shooting and urged to make haste to Fillmore as talk of a lynching was circulating. Bradfield requested McCampbell to drive him to Ventura to surrender. The sheriff testified that he met McCampbell and Bradfield near Santa Paula, where the defendant promptly surrendered himself and his shooting iron. The lynching tales were undoubtedly exaggerated, although the *Free Press* acknowledged in an editorial that there was talk of lynching in the air.¹⁸

Two days before Bradfield was scheduled to go on trial on charges of assault to commit murder, the offices of McCampbell, Sespe Light & Power, and Mason Bradfield burned to the ground in a mysterious midnight fire. It was probably just a coincidence, but the writer dislikes coincidences

of this nature. Too frequently they end up being germane to the principal case at hand. In the present instance it will just have to remain a coincidence.

The trial of Bradfield should have been held in Fillmore; it would have saved wear and tear on Telegraph Road. The prosecution was nearly as open and shut a case as any district attorney could desire. The defendant admitted the shooting, a half dozen witnesses saw it, and George Henley's coat had holes in the back to prove it.

Bradfield's attorneys, Earl Moss of Ventura and Veitch & Richardson of Los Angeles, concentrated on attempting to prove that George Henley's reputation for peace and quiet left a good deal to be desired, leaving Bradfield with the delusion he was in imminent peril. Several prominent Fillmore residents, and Sespe Light & Power employees testified that Henley's reputation for peace and quiet ran the gauntlet from "aggravating" to "not good" to "bordering on the bad" to "bad." Under cross examination most of this evidence broke down to the simple fact that George's tollgate had so enraged fishermen they were willing to testify the owner's reputation was bad.

The truth of the matter was Henley had a perfect right to put in that gate. The road was on his property; most out of county users were camping on his land, a fact of life that gave George the privilege of charging a fee for its use. Further, he had offered to deed the road to the county if the county would agree to maintain it. The offer was refused, probably because of the serious flood hazards involved. As a result Henley continued to exact a fee at his gate for years to come.

The outcome of the case was never in doubt. Bradfield was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon, a less serious offense than assault to commit murder. The jury even recommended to the judge that leniency be shown in the sentencing. It is interesting to note that Ex-senator Flint, Mayor Sebastian of Los Angeles, plus a large number "of leading Los Angeles attorneys and business-men"¹⁹ took the stand to act as character witnesses for Bradfield. Even more interesting was the fact that Los Angeles attorneys produced certificates regarding Bradfield's ill-health. The specific nature of his health problems was not revealed, but the inference could be construed that it was of a mental type.

Upon his release Bradfield again became active in Sespe Light & Power. As late as 1921, Bradfield, murderer and ex-felon, was still searching for a financial fairy godfather. He had even negotiated a contract with a highly regarded Los Angeles engineering firm, Bent Bros. Engineering Co., to take over the project. The rather complicated arrangement fell through when Sespe Light & Power found itself unable to meet its com-

mitments in the Contract.²⁰ With the ultimate demise of Sespe Light & Power Company, Bradfield faded into the sunset of Sespe history.

It will always be an amazing phenomenon to this writer how Bradfield could have persuaded so many local people to buy stock in his Sespe Light & Power Company, or how so many prominent Los Angeles and state officials would come to his aid after his shooting escapades. Here was a man who had killed once in cold blood and had attempted to kill again by shooting George Henley in the back. At best any layman with an ounce of ability for simple observation should have been able to see he was subject to moments of serious mental instability. At worst Bradfield was the perfect Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde personality.

The answer probably lies in one sentence of a *Free Press* news story: "Fillmorites expect something good to come to them out of the future of the Sespe Light & Power Company. . . ." ²¹

People will even vote stupidly if they "expect something good to come to them."

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Ventura *Daily Free Press*, October 28, 1915.
- ² Original in possession of Ynez Haase.
- ³ *Op. cit.*
- ⁴ Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, May 11, 1906.
- ⁵ Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, March 2, 1894.
- ⁶ Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, July 19, 1901.
- ⁷ Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, November 17, 1901.
- ⁸ Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, March 2, 1900.
- ⁹ Not to be confused with Big Sespe Oil Company of California formed in 1896.
- ¹⁰ Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, March 27, 1910.
- ¹¹ Ventura *Daily Free Press*, October 28, 1915.
- ¹² Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, December 27, 1912.
- ¹³ Ventura *Daily Free Press*, May 7, 1915.
- ¹⁴ For a comprehensive outline of Sespe Light & Power plans see Vernon Freeman's *People-Land-Water*, Los Angeles, 1968.
- ¹⁵ Ventura *Daily Free Press*, October 22, 1915.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Ventura *Daily Free Press*, October 22, 1915.
- ¹⁸ Ventura *Daily Free Press*, July 9, 1915.
- ¹⁹ Ventura *Daily Free Press*, November 12, 1915.
- ²⁰ Freeman, *op. cit.*
- ²¹ Ventura *Weekly Free Press*, April 9, 1915.

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE
VENTURA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
QUARTERLY



VOL. 30, NO. 4

SUMMER 1985

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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Cover illustration courtesy of Ven-
tura County Sheriff's Department.

Photographs from the Ventura
County Historical Museum collec-
tion unless otherwise indicated.

This issue is lovingly
dedicated to the
memory of
ROBERT EMMETT CLARK
Ventura County Sheriff
1922-1933

From "Silent Bob" Clark:

Somebody put the laws on the books and my job will be to see that folks obey the laws. If they don't like the laws they can leave the country. As long as they stay in this neck of the woods they've got to walk the chalk. That's all. (Campaign, 1922, as quoted in *L. A. Times*)

I was a Democrat who'd been a Ranger under Republicans, but when I got to be Sheriff I said I'd come to California when I was five years old from a town in Wisconsin named Fairplay. I'd try to make my birthplace my motto. (*Fortnight*, May 5, 1954)

I worked as hard to clear an innocent man as to convict a guilty one and I'm as proud of my record in that respect as for any murderer I ever caught dead to rights. (*Fortnight*, May 5, 1954)

From the *Ventura Daily Post*, May 23, 1926:

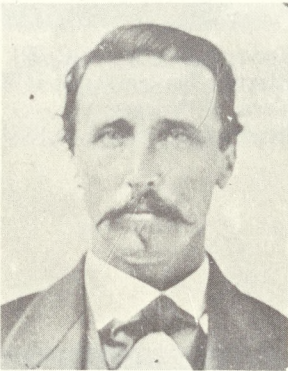
In the four years he has been in office, raids against booze joints, dope dens, gambling and prostitution houses have resulted in over 500 arrests with practically all convictions.

He has handled over 600 justice court cases and has worked up the evidence so well that the district attorney's office secured convictions in all but two of the cases.

He has handled 18 murder cases and has arrested his man in all but one, a record perhaps that has never been excelled anywhere.

THE SHERIFFS OF VENTURA COUNTY

Portraits, Election Dates and Terms of Office



Franklin L. Peterson (D)

Elected: February 25, 1873

Term of Office:

March 1873 to March 1874

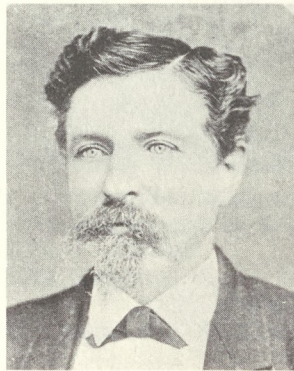
John R. Stone (R)

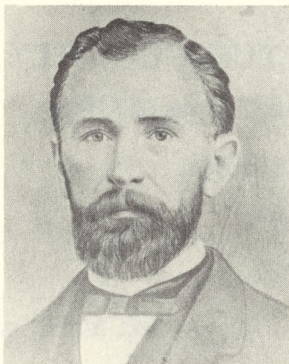
Elected: September 3, 1873

September 1, 1875

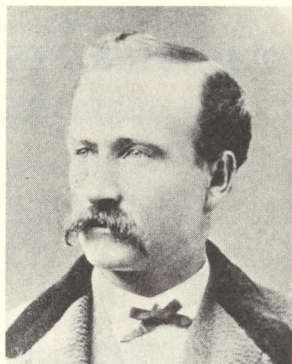
Term of Office:

March 1874 to March 1878

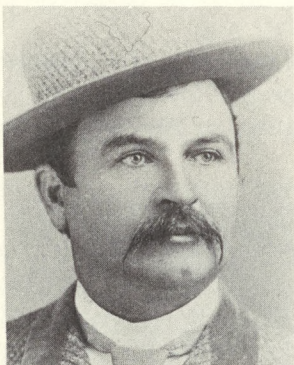




Joseph M. Miller (D)
 Elected: September 5, 1877
 Term of Office:
 March 1878 to March 1880



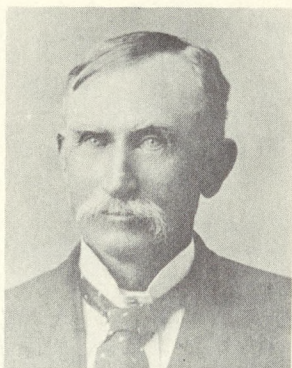
Joseph Detroy (NC, R)
 Elected: September 3, 1879
 Term of Office:
 March 1880 to March 1883



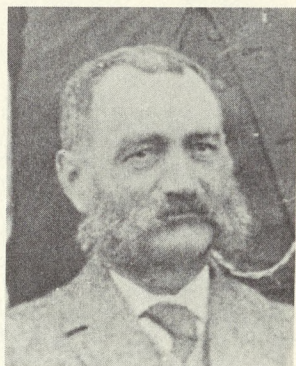
Andrew J. Snodgrass (D)
 Elected: November 7, 1882
 November 4, 1884
 November 2, 1886
 Term of Office:
 March 1883 to January 1889



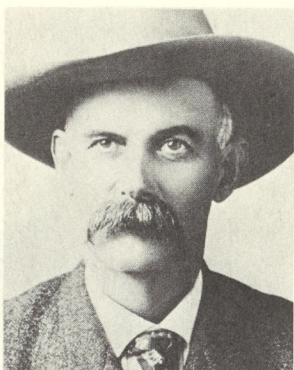
William H. Reilly (R)
 Elected: November 6, 1888
 November 4, 1890
 Term of Office:
 January 1889 to January 1893



James Walker (R, Pro)
 Elected: November 8, 1892
 Term of Office:
 January 1893 to January 1895



Paul C. Charlebois (D, PP)
 Elected: November 6, 1894
 November 8, 1898
 Term of Office:
 January 1895 to January 1903



Edmund Guy McMartin (R)
 Elected: November 4, 1902
 November 6, 1906
 November 8, 1910
 November 3, 1914
 November 5, 1918
 Term of Office:
 January 1903 to August 1921
 (Killed in the line of duty)



T. William McGlinchey
 Appointed: August 1921
 Term of Office:
 August 1921 to January 1923



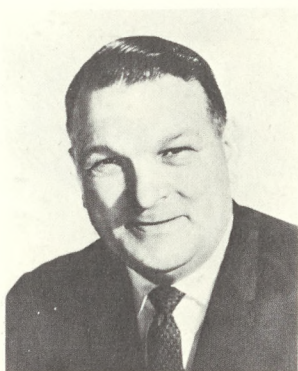
Robert Emmett Clark
 Elected: November 7, 1922
 November 2, 1926
 November 4, 1930
 Term of Office:
 January 1923 to July 1933
 (Appointed U.S. Marshal,
 District of S. California)



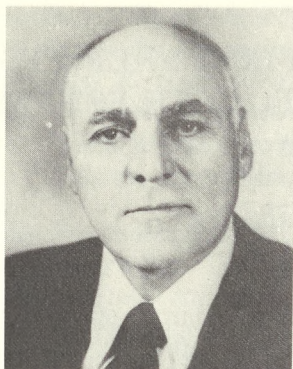
L. Howard Durley
 Appointed: July 1933
 Elected: November 6, 1934
 November 8, 1938
 November 3, 1942
 November 5, 1946
 November 7, 1950
 Term of Office:
 July 1933 to January 1955



William J. Suytar
 Elected: November 2, 1954
 Term of Office:
 January 1955 to January 1959



William E. Hill
 Elected: November 4, 1958
 November 6, 1962
 November 8, 1966
 November 3, 1970
 Term of Office:
 January 1959 to January 1975

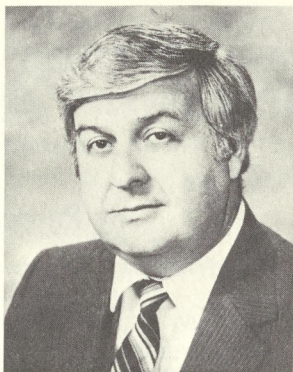


Al Jalaty

Elected: November 5, 1974
November 7, 1978
November 2, 1982

Term of Office:

January 1975 to April 1984
(Resigned due to ill health)



John V. Gillespie

Appointed: April 1, 1984

EARLY ELECTIONS AND FIRST SHERIFFS PARTISANSHIP AND THE FOURTH ESTATE 1873-1902

by Patricia Clark Callachor

Ventura County, the fiftieth county to be created in the state of California, came into being when Governor Newton Booth affixed his signature to Assembly Bill Number 218, March 22, 1872. William Dewey Hobson, who had spent the winter in Sacramento successfully lobbying the "Organic Act of Ventura County" through the California State Legislature, returned home to Township Number One, Santa Barbara County; and the township (soon to be Ventura County) returned more or less to normal. The bill was not scheduled to go into effect until January 1, 1873.

With the approach of the new year, attention again focused on the fledgling county. Santa Barbara wished its "only child" well:

It is a healthy brat of great promise. We hope it will never fling mud at its old mother! . . . The new county starts out under the most favorable auspices. The debt will be nominal, and the people are determined to put good men in office. They will adhere to this determination and will have no rings to contend with. We wish our offspring good speed. We expect to see it beat every contessant [sic] in the race for opulance, save Santa Barbara.¹

Local merchants turned the great event to their own peculiar advantage:

Ventura County
Will Be Organized
January 1, 1873
BUT
Grant & Bickford's
Carriage and Blacksmithing
Establishment
Is Always Organized²

And a "Grand Celebration Ball" was scheduled to be held at Spear's Hall, corner of Main and Palm Streets, on the night of January 1st: "Tickets Including Supper, Music and Dancing--\$3.00." All of the county's 3,500 inhabitants were invited to attend.³

January 4, *Signal* editor John Bradley reported the arrival of a telegram from Governor Booth appointing Milton Wason first Ventura County judge and Thomas R. Bard, Reverend Sherlock Bristol, Angel G. Escandon, William de Forest Richards and Dr. Charles W. Thacker members of a board of commissioners "to organize and set in motion the county government."⁴ This the commissioners did with great dispatch and but one false start.

The first meeting of the board of commissioners was held January 13, 1873, at Spear's Hall. The board settled upon their own leadership, electing Bristol, president, and Bard, secretary, then set about preparing for the county elections required to be held within sixty days of this first meeting.

The commissioners first partitioned the new county into three townships—Ventura, Saticoy and Hueneme—each constituting a district in need of a supervisor. Next, for voting purposes, the county was divided into eight precincts: San Buenaventura, La Cañada, Mountain View, Sespe, Saticoy, Pleasant Valley, San Pedro and Hueneme. The board then issued an election proclamation, election to be held February 20, 1873, declared themselves "County Clerk" and prepared to register electors—until a telegram arrived from state Attorney General John L. Lowe: "Ventura is not a county until county officers are elected and qualified."⁵ That is, the board was not empowered to act as county clerk, not able to register electors in the new county. The attorney general neglected to explain just how Ventura County could come by an elected and qualified county clerk without benefit of election, nor did the commissioners inquire.

Immediately they sent an urgent request to the clerk of mother county Santa Barbara for certified copies of the "Great Register of Santa Barbara County: Township Number One." Santa Barbara officials, not altogether convinced of the legality of the request,⁶ nevertheless hastened to the rescue, as mothers often do with wayward children. A sufficient number of certified copies of the great register were supplied and a sufficient number of deputies (three) were appointed—and by January 25, a new election proclamation was issued for February 25, 1873, just five days later than the original date.

According to Thompson & West, county Republicans hoped to avoid divisive partisan politics at this first election. To that end, they proposed "a fusion of the Democrats and Republicans, and an effort to select, irrespective of party, suitable individuals as candidates, whose election would secure benefits not to be had otherwise."⁷ The response of county Democrats to this proposal is not a matter of public record; what *is* a matter of public record is that the Republican primaries were held February 1, 1873; Democratic primaries, the week following.

Candidates abounded, declaring themselves either in paid advertisements in the *Signal*, or in anonymous lists furnished to *Signal* editor Bradley "by a friend." ("About this time," W. D. Hobson was later to observe, "we began to be affected with the rinderpest of office seekers.")⁸ And the office most desirable, if one may judge by the number of applicants, was that of sheriff.

Twelve good men and true, to hear the *Signal* tell it, declared themselves as candidates for said office: William B. Baker, J. Cameron, S. M. Woodson Easley, Frank Molleda, Charles E. Murray, R. C. Pearson, Frank Peterson, William Ramsaur, J. R. Stone, G. A. Strickland, and Jose Ignacio del Valle. All declarations being subject to the endorsement of their respective parties, in due course their respective parties selected William B. Baker, Republican, and Franklin L. Peterson, Democrat, as candidates.

Editor Bradley then obliged his readers with what reads as the most noncommittal, unbiased and uninformative candidate assessment of all time:

For this office, W. B. Baker and Frank Peterson are the opposing candidates. They are both farmers and neighbors, of the Santa Paula. Of their precedents or peculiar qualifications we know nothing. Personally, they are very excellent gentlemen, and their respective friends claims that they will make competent and efficient officials. Let us hope that the better of the two will succeed.⁹

February 25, 1873, the polls at precincts San Buenaventura, La Cañada, Sespe, Saticoy, Pleasant Valley, San Pedro and Hueneme opened promptly at 1:00 p.m. and closed promptly at 5:00 p.m., as decreed by the election proclamation. As for Mountain View, whose boundaries comprised the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the new county with southern boundary extending:

easterly from a point in the Santa Paula creek and opposite the eastern end of the Sulphur Mountain, and following the summit of the Sierra Pinal, so called, to the eastern boundary of the county of Ventura, excluding the farms and dwellings of Joseph Bartlett and ——— Richardson, in the Santa Paula cañon,¹⁰

it opened not at all. It was not that the rugged inhabitants of this remote region declined the opportunity to exercise their franchise; nor was it that the new county did not value their few votes. It was that the precinct of Mountain View had no poll-books or other necessary election paraphernalia, as the *Signal* reported, "in consequence of deep snows."

By March 10, the votes had been canvassed by the commissioners and they turned over the reins of county government to Supervisors James

Daley, J. A. Conway and C. W. Thacker. Six hundred eight voters had participated in Ventura County's first election. Republican candidate for sheriff Baker had been defeated by Democratic candidate Peterson, one of six Democrats chosen for office. Dr. Cephas Bard, who received the nomination of both parties for the office of coroner, was, of course, unanimously elected. Ironically, the one successful Republican candidate, Evan A. Edwards, treasurer, was the one candidate who had received from the gentle Bradley what amounted to a censorious assessment:

As we can say nothing in his favor, we will say nothing against him.¹¹ Why was he then elected? Rumor had it, according to J. H. Morrison, that Edwards was the one man in town with a fire and burglar resistant safe.¹²

FRANKLIN L. PETERSON

The first sheriff of Ventura County did not have an easy time of it. Not only was he expected to see to the protection of the citizenry, assisted by one constable in Ventura Township, one constable in Hueneme Township, two constables in Saticoy Township and an occasional deputy—he was also expected to collect taxes and serve subpoenas, summonses, attachments on property, etc. over this territory of some 1,800 square miles. Moreover, the office of sheriff was a “fee office”; that is, he was paid only for specific services rendered.

Nor did respect for law and order come with the territory. As Thompson & West had observed of the old county some twenty years earlier, there was a “strong and active element among the Americans who practically denied the authority of any officer.” In an intervening twenty years, the Civil War had been fought, won and settled—legally—but not in the hearts of Confederate sympathizers, many of whom had taken up residence in Ventura County.

Santa Barbara bandido, daring and reckless Jack Powers, who defied the powerful and enormously wealthy Don Nicholas Den, was more apt to excite local admiration than was his adversary, Santa Barbara Sheriff Twist.¹³ Americans and Californios alike relished tales of the semi-mythological Robin Hood of the Californios, Joaquin Murieta, Muriati, Ocomorenia, Valenzuela, Boteller, Bottello or Carrillo.

As for Tiburcio Vasquez, while he was a bit too close to home to be admired overmuch, the whole town and much of the county turned out to get a look at the captured bandit on the old sidewheel steamer *Senator* when it pulled up to the Ventura Wharf on its way north. The month was May; the year was 1874—just three months after Peterson's election.

It was during Peterson's first month in office that the county's most

notorious lynching occurred. George Hargan, of the Colonia, murdered George Martin, his neighbor. Martin, while plowing his fields, had overlapped onto Hargan's fields by some twenty yards. Hargan, having warned Martin not to do so, felt justified in firing a load of buckshot through Martin's heart. Martin's other neighbors, one of whom had witnessed the shooting, did not feel the act was justified.

The whole neighborhood turned out and consulted together and kept the prisoner closely confined and guarded until the testimony was heard before the coroner's jury. The testimony was so plain and the crime so great, and as there was no officer present to take charge of the prisoner, the bystanders took him to the pine tree near the cactus patch and hung him.¹⁴

It was later determined that a justice of the peace and a constable were present. Their demand that the prisoner be released to them in the same of the law was disregarded.¹⁵

Two further noteworthy events occurred during Sheriff Peterson's brief year in office. Neither involved the sheriff any more than did the meting out of justice on Rancho Colonia, but both were of considerable import to the new county. On June 2, 1873, Thomas Jackson Stark, age twenty-one, occupation farmer, resident of Saticoy precinct, inscribed his signature—the first—in the first *bona fide* "Great Register of Ventura County," soon to be completed by *bona fide* Ventura County Clerk S. M. W. Easley. The second momentous event—June 14, 1873—the sale of the *Ventura Signal* to John J. Sheridan and W. E. Shepherd by retiring editor, John Bradley.

Under the guidance of Bradley's successors, the *Signal* took on a decidedly Democratic hue. Republicans, being quite aware that they had no medium by which to impart their own brand of message, in 1875 imported O. P. Hoddy, editor, and the *Ventura Free Press* was born. The *Signal* then came out of the closet, and "took Democratic ground, giving as reason for any change of principles that the Republican leaders had grown so corrupt as to promise nothing but ill to the unfortunate country whose government they controlled"—an unequivocal declaration of war. This war was to delight and dismay county residents, in direct proportion to said residents' degree of involvement, for years to come.

For the second election of 1873, however, matters and editors were still relatively calm. This second election, held September 3, was called in order that county elections be synchronized with regular elections on the state level. There was one less precinct; Mountain View disappeared for all time from county election sheets. The popular thirty-one-year-old Frank Peterson (D), a bachelor and quite a ladies' man,¹⁷ was replaced (with a twenty-one vote margin) by John Richard Stone (R).

JOHN R. STONE

Saddler and harness maker Stone, who had opposed Baker in the Republican primaries of February, promised a greater degree of stability than did Peterson. Not only was he older—forty years of age—he was married to Maria Antonia Foxen of the Santa Barbara land-grant Foxens. He was civic minded, having served on a committee to see to road improvement in the county, signed the petition for the new Hill School and worked on the Grand Celebration Ball held at Spear's Hall at the beginning of the year. He was, in fact, regarded as one of the founders of Ventura County. What is more, as a charter member of Freedom's Defenders, Lincoln Council (Ventura County's Union adherents), he was a "right-minded" individual. (Missouri-born Frank Peterson had been no small amount discomfited when, at a Fourth of July picnic, he found he had enthusiastically cheered Deputy Clerk Eastin's rendering of the Emancipation Proclamation. He and others present were under the impression they had been applauding the Declaration of Independence.)¹⁸

Sheriff Stone got off to a good start. By his second year in office he was so well organized that he was able to successfully suppress the news of a particularly messy domestic murder on the Rincon. In short order both the new widow and the hired man of the deceased were apprehended in Wadsworth, Nevada, brought back to Ventura County, tried and sentenced to life imprisonment. In the campaign of 1875, Sheriff Stone easily defeated Democratic opponent O'Hara with an eighty-three vote majority. It was in Stone's second term that he met his nemesis.

March 24, 1877, at one o'clock in the morning, T. Wallace More was shot—not just shot, but shot a number of times by a number of men—as he ran out of his home in the Sespe to save his horses trapped in a burning barn. This brutal murder was the culmination of a long standing feud between More, owner of Rancho Sespe, and the Sespe Settlers League. The feud involved a large amount of land—and a small amount of water. It was, as pointed out by historian Charles Outland, the logical outcome of the inherent conflict between the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Homestead Act of 1862.

It was later surmised that one-third of the local population knew the identities of the murderers.¹⁹ It was a *cause celebre*, drew the attention of newspapers across the United States and Europe—but not the attention of the sheriff of Ventura County.

Outland, in his definitive "The More Murder Case: A New Look," states: "There is nothing in the evidence to indicate that Sheriff Stone even went out to make an investigation. . . . If the sheriff or the district attorney

did any investigation of the murder, it was the best kept secret of its time."²⁰ In Stone's defense it must be added that the More brothers had immediately engaged a staff of professional detectives as well as their own prosecuting attorney, L. C. Granger. But does that absolve the sheriff, or the district attorney for that matter, from responsibility? The *Ventura Free Press* of April 27, 1878, now edited by H. G. McLean, thought that it did:

Suppose the Sheriff of this County had put in three months of his time in hunting up this case? Who would or could have paid him? For a summons or subpoena the law provides that he shall be paid, but not for knocking around three or four months and perhaps accomplishing nothing. There is no fund to meet such a case, and cannot be, in the nature of things. If such charges were paid out of the county treasury, every police officer would be hunting or pretending to hunt criminals all the time. It would bankrupt the taxpayer.

Three months later, June 7, 1877, Jeff Howard, a mountaineer and favorite county "character," shot and killed Basque sheepherder Alphonso Urtasan. Urtasan's sheep were feeding on Howard's grain in his Rocky Creek Canyon claim in the Sespe. Howard, when he discovered he had killed the man, gave himself up, was tried and convicted of murder in the second degree. The night before he was to be sentenced, he escaped. Presiding Judge Fawcett, who was still waiting for an arrest in the More murder case, had several scathing remarks to make regarding the general state of law enforcement in Ventura County. The *Free Press* added a few comments concerning "criminal negligence,"²¹ but the *Signal* proved magnanimous in victory: "We do not think, as the *Free Press* intimates, that Sheriff Stone ought to be indicted, or sent to the penitentiary."²² Sheriff Stone did not choose to run for re-election in 1877.

Stone's undersheriff, C. D. Bonestal (R) *did* run and was defeated 558 to 601 by Joseph M. Miller, a Democrat—the candidate supported by the *Signal*. There were 1,159 votes polled in the county in this election; and, fifty more Democrats than Republicans.

JOSEPH M. MILLER

The first "scoop" on behalf of Sheriff Miller occurred in the *Signal's* "Election Extra" of September 4, 1877; another jailbreak by another "notorious" outlaw had occurred two days before election.

On Monday afternoon, about 5 p.m., while the prisoners in charge of Alex Valdez, an assistant jailer, were working on the courthouse grounds, Charles Hill, the desperate character sentenced by Judge Blackstock for contempt of court and indecent exposure of his person, made his escape.

SHERIFF'S FEES.

VENTURA COUNTY, CAL.

For serving Summons and Complaint on each Defendant.....	\$ 1
" serving Attachment on Property.....	2
" Levying Execution on Property.....	2
" Executing order of arrest.....	2
" Delivery of Personal Property.....	2
" Serving attachment on any ship, boat or vessel.....	3
" Keeper's Fees, under Attachment, per diem.....	3
" Taking Bond or Undertaking.....	1
" Copy of any Writ, Process or other Paper, per folio.....	20
" serving every notice, rule or order.....	1
" Advertising property for sale on execution or under judgment of order of sale.....	1
" Executing Certificate of Sale.....	1
" Attending on any court of record, per diem.....	3
" Making any arrest in any criminal proceeding.....	2
" Summoning a Grand Jury of 24 persons.....	8
" Summoning a trial jury of 12 persons or less.....	4
" Summoning each additional juror.....	25
" Executing every sentence of death.....	20 00
" All civil services in justice's courts (the same fees as allowed to Constables).....	
" Delivering a prisoner to the State prison, per mile.....	50
" delivering an insane person to the Asylum, per mile.....	50
" Serving Writ of Restitution or Possession.....	3
" Holding each inquest, or Trial of right of Property.....	3
" Serving Subpœna, on each Witness summoned.....	50
" Mileage in serving any Paper, per mile.....	30
" Drawing and Executing a Sheriff's Deed.....	3 50
" Commissions for receiving and paying over money on Execu- tion, or other Process, when lands or Personal Property have been levied on and sold: On the first \$1,000, three per cent. On all sums over that amount, two per cent. sions for receiving and paying over Money on Execu- a without Levy and Sale: On the first \$1,000, one and e-half per cent. And one per cent. on all over that ount.	

5, 1874

JOHN R. STONE,

In the first place, according to *Signal* editor Shepherd, the jailbreak would never have occurred had not the entire staff been out campaigning for Bonestal's election. What was even more reprehensible, however, was the "cover-up"—surely the whole town should have been "aroused" and sent in pursuit.²³ And who was it who had discovered "the truth?" None other than Sheriff-elect Jo Miller himself.

October 12, 1877, another jailbreak occurred (it should be noted that the escapees were neither "desperate" nor "notorious"):

Prisoners Lee and Lawler, who had been serving misdemeanour [sic] terms, . . . unbolted cell lock fastenings, ripped out a window casement, pried through a brick wall, forced open another window, stacked chairs and scaled the wall of the yard.²⁴

The fault, in this instance, was laid at the doorstep of "Mr. Republican," W. D. Hobson, who had in the past been accused by the *Signal* of everything from bullying the coroner's jury in the More case to assaulting a cripple.²⁵ It was he who had built the jail and the jail was clearly substandard.

Joseph Miller was a popular man in Ventura County. He was a pioneer—had, in fact, crossed the plains twice in a covered wagon. In 1866 he moved to Ventura, later marrying Josephine Arenas, member of a prominent Californio family. He became deeply involved in the affairs of the community, supporting the "Organic Act of Ventura County," as well as the bond issue for Hill School. Through the years he made his living, in his own words, "mining, hotel-keeping, auctioneering, merchandising . . . and all the time a little politics."²⁶ In the first county election, Miller had been one of the Democratic nominees for county clerk (his friend, Frank Molleda, had won). Then, at forty-six years of age, he was elected to public office.

It was Sheriff Miller who received the orders for execution of Frederick Augustus Sprague—"to be carried out by Ventura County Sheriff in jail yard"—Frederick Augustus Sprague being the only one of the "Sespe squatters" to be convicted of the 1877 murder of T. Wallace More. And it was Sheriff Miller who received an equivalent number of stays of execution, reprieves, etc., for the same Sprague.

Sheriff Miller's most notable success, as reported in the *Ventura Signal* May 24, 1879, was the capture of Jesse Jefferson Howard, whose 1877 escape had proved the final blow to the career of Sheriff Stone. It was Al Barnard, Miller's deputy, who tracked Howard for nearly a year, locating him "in the mountain fastnesses of Arizona, then as wild a place as any in the world."²⁸

Just one week later, May 31, 1879, the *Signal* had another report on

Jeff Howard: he was no longer in the county jail—nor could Sheriff Miller and his staff account for his whereabouts. They could definitely describe his method of escape as he had left behind him one crowbar, two knives, the shackles which had been welded in place around his ankles, and a fairly well destroyed jail cell. Tucking two jail blankets under his arm, the old mountaineer simply disappeared into the mountains, never to be officially seen again in Ventura County, giving Miller's Republican opponents cause for great rejoicing—which they undertook with neither qualm nor delay.

The Ventura *Signal* was at this time under the direction of E. M. and Sol Sheridan, John Sheridan having sold out and gone back to Missouri, W. E. Shepherd having resigned rather abruptly mid-way through the Sprague trial. "The boys," so christened by G. W. McCoy of the *Free Press*, were given to frequent sermonizing regarding their role in the community.

The Law of Libel

In this corrupt age, when the very air seems poisoned, . . . we believe . . . in free speech, and in a free untrammelled press. The man who seeks to restrain either will be crushed. (January 26, 1878)

They were given just as frequently to issuing contradictory messages in honor of rival *Free Press* editor, "Dirty McLean."

The Slanderer

We now propose, in conclusion, to admonish our neighbors of the Free Press that in their published slanders and dirty insinuations, both of them are treading on *extremely* dangerous ground. We hope we may never have to allude to this matter again. (March 2, 1878)

If the Sheridans seldom lacked the courage of their convictions, they never lacked the words to express them. In the present situation, however, the boys were hard pressed to come up with a defense for their sheriff. And whenever hard pressed for any reason, *Signal* policy had been to attack W. D. Hobson.

And W. D. Hobson played beautifully into their hands on three counts: first, by forming a new party; secondly, by barring the *Signal* from the New Constitution Party primaries held June 16, 1879, at Spear's Hall:

. . . the good Republican leaders bolted the doors in our faces, and, in profound secrecy "fixed" the thing to suit their own hungry maws. They put known Republicans at the head, and filled in the chinks with what might be termed Democrats, but who have not a Democratic bone in their respective bodies, except when it behooves them to switch about and slide into the Democratic ranks, when they have an ax to grind, or some self-interest to serve. (June 21, 1879)

The *Signal's* "Truthful James" declared the proceedings "star

chamber business," the party itself, "Pinto Party" (because of the variegated hue of the members), and dubbed the candidates "Hobson's Choice."

Hobson's choice for sheriff, Joseph Detroy, gave the boys no ammunition at all. A long-time county resident, Detroy with his brother George owned a butcher shop in "Wynema," and one in Ventura, the latter originally located in the first structure built in Ventura by Selwyn Shaw, "a little one story frame affair which stood next to the Bank of Italy on Main."²⁹ The Detroys later moved their shop to the southwest corner of Main and Figueroa Streets, directly opposite the Old Mission Church, operating said shops in a manner which made them an asset to the community. Like Sheriff Miller and Sheriff Stone, Detroy had married into one of the old and respected families, his wife being descended from both the Figueroas and the Ticos.

By August 18, however, the Sheridans had hit upon a strategy:

It takes a full term for a new man to learn the duties of Sheriff. A change now would be a needless expense, for Detroy would have all the office duties to learn. . . . Republicans cannot vote for Detroy for he has deserted them. And Democrats will of course vote for Miller, for he is their special favorite, a good man, an honest man, and a man of ability. His election is a foregone conclusion.

And then Hobson gave the boys their third and final ace. August 23, 1879, a full two pages of the *Signal's* regular four-page edition was devoted to the *Signal's* favorite target under the full cap headline "A NEST OF SNAKES." Revelation after revelation came to light—all centered around the fact that W. D. Hobson and G. W. McCoy (of the *Free Press*) had approached one Thomas Binns, "½ mile up Ventura Avenue," and asked if he would like to trade a note he held on the *Signal* office for "a small fruit farm or for cash."

A legitimate transaction, if wanted to be made by honest men would have been made at the *Signal* office at a business, and not before breakfast, up the cañon, on Sunday. . . . No business man is safe with these undermining schemers at large, and it is the duty of all honest men to look well lest they be fostering vipers in their midst. . . . Would Hobson make a good editor? Probably. He has failed in everything else except dirty political work, and he might be able to run a paper—into sole-trading [sic] where he has been himself.

Then the *coup de grace*, the end to "fruit-farm candidate" Detroy's aspirations:

It has been said that Mr. Detroy if elected, will make W. D. Hobson his deputy. Unless Mr. Detroy refutes that story, he cannot get into office, as

the people do not want the low, tricky politician, this schemer who would try to undermine honest men in their business, foisted upon them in an office he could ever [sic] get through the people.

"The vote all around is a study," said the *Signal* of September 6, 1879, . . . "it has simply gone contrary to all expectation." Joseph Detroy had been elected by a seventy-eight vote margin over incumbent Miller. W. D. Hobson, if he was offered the post of undersheriff, did not accept. As for Sheriff Miller, who had been under heavy fire from the *Free Press*, he entered the war of words once only—in response to an anonymous accusation printed in the *Free Press* of August 30. His entry says as much about the man as it does about the situation:

I very much dislike personal controversies through newspapers. I never wrote an anonymous article in my life against anyone, and have seldom been attacked by one. I had determined at one time, I would not, however aggravated the slander through the papers, make any reply; but the last *Free Press* contains a communication from some cowardly cur which may do me injury as a citizen unless refuted. . . .

The Sheridans and McLean had three years to cool their respective presses to room temperature after the election of 1879. Legislation on the state level decreed that state, therefore county, elections were to be adjusted to coincide with those on the national level. Incumbents in the county offices were to serve three-year terms, next election to be held in 1882.

The presidential election, of course, was held as scheduled, November 2, 1880, the *Signal* rejoicing that there was

no loud talk, no drunkenness, no pulling and hauling of voters near the polls, . . . thanks to the anti-saloon law and the one-hundred foot law (November 6, 1880),

not an untoward reaction. There were seventeen saloons in the city of Ventura at the time; that is, one saloon to every seventeen voters.³⁰ The population of Ventura County stood at 5,089, an increase of only 1,500 in the seven years of autonomy.

JOSEPH DETROY

The three-year term of Sheriff Detroy was remarkable in that it was unremarkable. F. A. Sprague was again sentenced to be hanged by the sheriff of Ventura County—on August 13, 1880. Two weeks later his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Sheriff Detroy transported his prisoner to San Quentin where, according to the *Signal*, "F. A. Sprague . . . [could] partially forget the ills of his life in penitentiary labor" (August 28, 1880).

The proposed execution of Vicente Garcia did excite some comment but not for the invitations that Sheriff Detroy issued for the event:

SAN BUENAVENTURA, Jan. 4, 1882.

Sheriff's Office, County of Ventura

Sir:

You are notified that the execution of Vicente Garcia for the murder of Stanislaus, an Indian, in this town on the 19th day of December, 1881, will take place at the Court House at San Buenaventura, Ventura County, Cal., on Wednesday, the 11th day of January, 1882, between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. You are most respectfully invited to be present.

Jos. Detroy
Sheriff Ventura County

Return this card as your permit.³¹

As the law required at least twelve reliable persons to witness the execution, the *Signal* saw no reason the sheriff should not invite as many people as he wished (January 7, 1882). "Humanity," in a letter to the *Signal* of the following week, however, did object to the gallows being erected in the jailyard directly under the window of the condemned—a mild censure, to say the least, compared to those issued by the *Signal* in the past.

Was Sheriff Detroy above reproach? Had the Sheridans managed to overcome partisan bias? Or had discretion become the better part of valor after the 1880 fatal shooting of Santa Barbara *Press* editor Glancey by Clarence Gray, an irate aspirant for public office?

The campaign of 1882 was so free from vitriol as to be positively saccharine. By January of '83, the *Signal* was able to congratulate itself that "during the entire campaign no single disparaging word was uttered against . . . [Sheriff Detroy's] official or personal career."³² It no doubt helped that the Democratic candidate was made to order for the job of sheriff.

ANDREW J. SNODGRASS

Andrew J. Snodgrass was the first Ventura County sheriff to have spent his childhood in the county. He was one of five children of Larkin Snodgrass, leading county Democrat, Ventura County treasurer (1875,

1876) and first president of the first county bank. (The Bank of Ventura opened its doors December 1, 1874.)

As for Andy himself, he brought excellent credentials to the job, having served as deputy assessor, constable and undersheriff to Jo Miller in his one term. In addition, he was charter member and second foreman of the Monumental Hose, Hook, Fire and Ladder Company, organized June 8, 1875. If there were a single county resident "Andy" had not met in the foregoing, he did so clerking at Roth & Arnaz, two doors down Main Street from the *Signal* office.

A. J. SNODGRASS,

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

FOR SHERIFF

OF VENTURA COUNTY

Election Tuesday, November 7th, 1882.

Snodgrass was also the first candidate for county office to receive an endorsement, as the *Signal* stated, "from abroad":

One of the wisest nominations that has been made . . . is that of Sheriff of Ventura county in the person of Mr. A. J. Snodgrass . . . Everybody . . . is familiar with the troubles of . . . [Ventura] county on account of the existence of an organized band of horse-thieves, whose operations extended as far as Lower California and as far north as Inyo county. All the southern part of the State was aroused on the subject but the people were comparatively helpless from the fact of the perfect system of organization of the equine freebooters, which rendered them virtually invincible in their movements.

In this emergency the superior detective ability of Mr. Snodgrass asserted itself, and for months he dogged their trail with the persistency of a blood-hound until the entire band were either behind prison bars or in climes more congenial to their nature. More of this style of gentry owe their posi-

tion in San Quentin to him than to any one man in the state. (*San Diego Sun* October 10, 1882)

Sheriff-elect Snodgrass had first shown his colors as a young man, living on his father's ranch in the Colonia. The twenty-two-year-old boy was the only person with sufficient compassion to pay a visit to Mrs. George Hargan the night of March 9, 1873. Immediately after, close on to midnight, he went to the tall pine tree next to the cactus patch, cut down the swinging corpse of the lynched man, then delivered it to the widow.

The *Free Press*, however, remained unconvinced that Snodgrass had won the election on merit alone. Editor H. G. McLean, since 1875 advocate of all things Republican, saw the victory as indicative of Republican failure rather than Democrat superiority. Nor was he altogether inaccurate in his assessment.

The stalwart, half-breed, and temperance Republicans met in force at Spear's Hall . . . Hara-Kiri was scientifically and Republicanly performed, as may be surmised by the proceedings and outcome. (August 25, 1882)

As the New Constitution Party had rent the Republican Party asunder in the election of 1879, so the Prohibition Party had done and would continue to do well into the 1900's. And what the Prohibitionists did for the Republicans, the Populists would do for the Democrats. Parties proliferated across the country as middle class America became increasingly dissatisfied with the inertia of the established parties. Although chaotic, it was a necessary chaos, precipitating needed political and social reform. For example, in 1883, shortly after Sheriff Snodgrass was sworn into office, the California Assembly passed on a piece of legislation that would substantially affect the new sheriff. Henceforth, all county officials were to have fixed salaries. Sheriff Snodgrass would be paid \$3,500 per annum, even if he were "knocking around three or four months and perhaps accomplishing nothing . . . hunting or pretending to hunt criminals all the time."³³

Sheriff Snodgrass had a successful first term, so successful that in the election of 1884 he defeated A. W. Browne (R) by 337 votes, the largest majority yet given a candidate for sheriff. "Tax Collector" was added to his title of "Sheriff," formal acknowledgement of what had been one of the sheriff's duties since 1873. By 1886, however, old editors were up to old tricks.

"Sheriff Snodgrass," reported the *Free Press* of October 22, 1886, "has asked for space in our paper to reply to certain charges made against him. We could not in justice deny anyone the privilege of being heard." An astounding statement coming from the *Free Press*—until one realizes that the *Free Press* was no longer edited by H. G. McLean, but by the Reverend

Stephen Bowers. The attack had, in fact, issued from McLean, now editor of the *Signal* reborn as *The Republican*. Neither McLean nor the *Signal* were to long survive this association.

"A Republican" had accused Sheriff Snodgrass of playing loose with state monies, the same charge levelled at Sheriff Jo Miller seven years earlier. Miller, quite correctly, had noted that "the law regulating fees of county officers is not what it should be."³⁴ His defense, which was well presented, left little doubt of his innocence. It was Jeff Howard's final escape that had proved his undoing.

At the center of the Snodgrass hurricane was the February 1866 delivery of one Babb, an insane person, to an asylum and of Mesa, a convict, to the penitentiary. It had taken one trip; therefore, there should have been only one charge, claimed the anonymous Republican. "Not so," said Snodgrass. There had been two commitments; precedent, the superior judge and the state board of examiners allow two charges. This attack, however unjustified, did not come unexpected. Said Snodgrass:

I knew that in the discharge of my duty I would peril my life as well as my good name. I had no reason to hope that I would be free from personal abuse and malicious slanders of the editor of the *Republican*. I have had reason to expect on account of the old feud which existed between him and one near to me [Sheriff Miller] that I would be made the subject of his venomous pen.³⁵

November 5, the *Free Press* announced the entire county Democratic ticket elected by a large majority, with the exception of the district attorney. As for Sheriff Snodgrass, who had defeated Republican candidate E. M. Jones with a comfortable 267 vote margin, "If he has violated the law the courts are open."

It was during Sheriff Snodgrass' third term of office that Governor Stoneman commuted the sentence of F. A. Sprague from life to twelve years which, with time off for good behavior, amounted to little more than seven years. By October 1, 1887, Frederick Augustus Sprague, the one man convicted of the murder of T. Wallace More, was a free man. And it was during Sheriff Snodgrass' third term of office that editor Bowers decided the sheriff was not fit for office, whether or not he had actually violated the law.

In the first place, Sheriff Snodgrass was still "posing as the great thief catcher," while in actuality twelve out of the fourteen horse thieves caught in the sheriff's present term had been caught by Deputy Constable Kemp.³⁶ A far more serious charge, however, was that Snodgrass, in the opinion of the Reverend Stephen Bowers, was morally unfit for office.

His associates are not such as an executive officer of the law should have. They are mostly of a disreputable order, gamblers, frequenters of lewd houses, and dissolute men . . . He not only is knowing to the fact that gambling is carried on in the town, contrary to law, but he knows the places where such practices are followed and knows the men who are engaged in the games and the time at which they are so engaged . . . Mr. Snodgrass frequently engaged in gambling games himself, and . . . has lost large sums at the gambling table.

It is also well known that all of the tin-horn gamblers, the hokey-pokey players and the men who live off the fallen women of the town, are arrant supporters of Mr. Snodgrass. They feel that their very existence in our midst depends upon his re-election. (October 11, 1888)

It was a shocking editorial. Everyone was aware that such places and practices existed. But Ventura's underworld, inhabited by creatures with such exotic and distancing names as Red Mollie, the Visalia Kid, Modoc Mary ("the notorious"), Maggie Sullivan ("the irrepressible"), Shamrock, Jose Cordero, kept to the lower west end of town. Respectable Ventura kept to the opposite end of town and points beyond—an interesting fiction and it worked until Sheriff Snodgrass was named—in print—for all to see—as having stepped over that invisible but impassable barrier.

John McGonigle, editor of the *Ventura Democrat*, rallied feebly, charging Republican opponent Reilly of being "too weak in the afterdeck" to serve capably as sheriff³⁷—hardly sufficient to counteract Bowers' blast of righteous indignation. Sheriff Snodgrass threatened not only to sue the *Free Press*, but to "break it up . . . and maul the life out of the editor."³⁸ Of course, he did neither—nor did he run for public office again.

In spite of the fact that local Democrats accused Republicans of using money in the campaign—"Not the first instance on record," sniffed Bowers, "of the devil rebuking sin"—the victory in 1888 was a Republican victory, locally as well as nationally. If the sheriff were relying on the support of "tin-horn gamblers, hokey-pokey players and men who live off the fallen women of the town," there were not enough in the county to get him into office. And William H. Reilly was elected sixth sheriff of Ventura County, 1,202 votes to Snodgrass' 849.

WILLIAM H. REILLY

William H. Reilly, at twenty-seven years of age, was and remains the youngest man to be elected sheriff of Ventura County. A native Californian, he had moved with his family to Ventura in 1874, when he was thirteen years old. Like Sheriff Peterson, he was a bachelor when he was voted into

office, a situation he soon remedied. April 11, 1889, the county flags were flying at half-mast in honor of the new sheriff's marriage to Miss May Beck of San Francisco, the ceremony having taken place in San Francisco.⁴⁰

It was soon back to business as usual, however, for just two weeks later the young sheriff circumvented what appears to have been the first bank robbery in Ventura County history. Sheriff Reilly had a decided advantage in this first test of his professional ability, for the would-be robber, James McCarthy, apparently had many things on his mind, none of which concerned his successful escape. The *Daily Free Press* tells the story well:

John Collins, of Collins & Sons' bank, on Main Street, had gone to lunch, leaving Jack Morrison in the bank alone. While enjoying a little rest all by himself, a man entered and began the relation of a doleful tale of poverty and distress. He was poor and desperate--had even thought of suicide. There was nothing left to live for, and if he could not have money he did not want to live. Finally he produced a small package, which he laid upon the counter, which act was supplemented by drawing a villainous six-shooter. He said the package was dynamite and that he would blow the whole institution up if Jack did not contribute the modest sum of \$30,000.

In the meantime, the robber had jumped over the counter and seized a tray containing about \$4,000 in gold and, returning to the street, walked pistol in hand, toward the corner of Main and California streets, where he had a horse in waiting.

Jack did not stop to count the money or the steps necessary to get out of the presence of his unwelcome visitor, but he dodged—in fact, “scrooched”—behind the counter and scooted out of the back door and left the robber monarch of the field, while he ran for the rear of E. S. Hall's place to give the alarm. Hall's place was locked, but he found the back door of Hearne's grocery store open, and came through there giving the alarm.

Sheriff Reilly happened to be near, but was without a pistol. He thought to run up behind and capture the man, but the latter turned and stood him off with his gun. At this Reilly withdrew and entered the hardware store of Charlebois & Co., and procured a shotgun and again appeared on the street before the man had time to reach his horse. At the sight of the gun with the determined eye of sheriff Reilly behind it, . . . [McCarthy] unconditionally surrendered. (April 24, 1889)

“Much is said in praise of Sheriff Reilly's coolness, nerve, and judgment in the whole affair,” concluded the article. “He has demonstrated that the office has fallen into competent hands.”

By July of the same year, however, Reilly was under attack. He was just not “Republican” enough to suit the editor of the *Free Press* (now the

Vidette), which fact he probably suspected long before he was elected.

Ventura County at this time was a battlefield and a battlefield with several fronts, various degrees of infighting and unpredictable alliances. In addition to the usual Democrat (versus Populist) versus Republican (versus Prohibition versus Independent) struggle there were the contingent high license versus low license versus no license conflicts as well as the saloon (all male) versus the dance hall (domain of the "soiled dove") contests.

Saloon keepers were violently opposed to high license for obvious reasons. And twenty-seven saloons in town, forty-nine in the county, each newcomer faithfully if dolefully listed by Bowers, amounted to a fair amount of violent opposition. Stephen Bowers was opposed to high license also—for the reason that he was opposed to saloons altogether. He was also opposed to alcohol—to any of those simple and not so simple pleasures enjoyed by his enemies, the Democrats. As Bowers had pointed out in 1884, of the twenty-one saloons then in town, all but one were owned by Democrats.⁴¹

Nor did the grand jury prove to be of much help to Bowers. It was in 1884, also, that this group of respectable citizens declined to take action on two bawdy houses "stocked with strumpets," located next to the Ventura County courthouse. There had been no complaints, reported the jury, from the inmates of the county jail⁴² (nor were houses of prostitution at this time illegal). With the help of Stephen Bowers, however, Ventura's attitude of *laissez faire* would soon come to an end.

By July of 1889, Bowers warned the sheriff if he didn't run the "pimps" out of town, the "Patagonians" would. One month later Bowers trumpeted that prostitutes were being brought into saloons, the sacrosanct haven of respectable men, married and otherwise. He threatened to "name names" if the practice were not stopped. Later in the same month, Bowers demanded the election of county officials who did not "stand in with the debasing elements of society."⁴³

Sheriff Reilly obliged the good reverend in September of 1889 by arresting "the illustrious Maggie Sullivan"; the charge: drunkenness. With the passage of Ventura County Ordinance Number 41, the county supervisors further obliged Bowers by setting a saloon licensing fee of \$600 per annum, payable in advance. By December of 1889, there were eleven saloons left in Ventura; seventeen, in the entire county.⁴⁴

The Democratic ticket was split in the election of November 4, 1890. But Reilly's majority was such (618 votes) that even had the Democrats and Populists combined, he would have won handily—"Quite a compliment to him," stated the *Free Press* of November 6, "as an officer and a citizen," aforesaid newspaper obviously no longer edited by Stephen Bowers. The

county population in 1890 had grown to 10,071. The number of precincts had increased to twenty-one, with newcomer Conejo censured and initially disqualified. Their 48 votes not only were not signed, but were, complained the *Free Press*, "in a generally bad and mixed-up condition."

March 1, 1890, W. C. Chormicle and W. A. Gardner shot and killed George Waltham and Dolores Cook at Castaic in Los Angeles County. On March 11, Bill Whitaker of Piru approached Sheriff Reilly stating that the men wished to surrender to him. Both felt their case had merit but were afraid it (and they) would not get to trial if they surrendered to local authorities⁴⁵—proof that law enforcement in Ventura County had gained a great deal of respect since the wild days of the Hargan lynching, the More murder and the Howard escapes.

A further vote of confidence was given the Ventura sheriff seven months later, and by mother county Santa Barbara. A "young and popular" Santa Barbara girl, Mary Desirelli, had been "foully murdered... by a brute named Ramon Lopez." Feeling was running high in Santa Barbara; it was feared that a lynching was imminent. The suspect was brought to Sheriff Reilly for safe keeping in the Ventura County jail. The next day, on hearing that a trainload of Barbareños were on their way to lynch his prisoner, Reilly high-tailed it for Los Angeles, catching the train at Montalvo.⁴⁶

Whatever the neighboring counties thought of Reilly, however, it was not enough to keep him in office. Moreover, it was his own party, led by the Reverend Stephen Bowers, editor of the *Free Press*, the *Vidette*, the *Golden State* or the *Observer*, that saw to his defeat.

Bowers' most persistent complaint, first lodged two months after the 1889 issuing of high license, was that saloons were not observing the 11:00 o'clock curfew. Those saloon keepers still in operation paid him no heed, nor did anyone else in town. In 1891, however, Bowers printed a description of night life, Main Street, Ventura, U.S.A. that did bring results:

On a recent Saturday evening a reporter of the *Observer* took a walk along portions of Main Street between the hours of 11 and 12 o'clock, and between Oak and Figueroa streets he found five saloons in full blast and it is currently reported that gambling and carousing is carried on in some of them the entire night. Glasses were clinking, billiard balls knocking, maudlin songs were being sung, and wild revelry was carried on within.

At the rear of one saloon a strumpet was entering amid the geers [sic] of several men who stood outside. The reporter was told that it was quite common for these fallen creatures to enter rooms by the backway From another dive an officer whose *sworn duty* it is to see that these places are closed at 11 o'clock, was seen to emerge.⁴⁷

To the foregoing, Bowers added accusations against Reilly of "feather-bedding" and "big bossism," citing specifics, including that Reilly had gone to the horse races (in San Diego) on county time. He demanded and got a grand jury investigation into his charges. The grand jury found public sympathy to be "with or under the influence of the saloon element and that little or no encouragement is given to the peace officers to carry out the law," insufficient excuse, they added, for either town or county officers to neglect such duties.

Further, the Grand Jury found irregularities in the sheriff's office and recommended that the district attorney take steps to recover money illegally paid to Undersheriff Wason.⁴⁸

The district attorney did take action against Sheriff Reilly and Undersheriff Wason. Judge B. T. Williams found both officers "clean as a hound's tooth." Undersheriff Wason then proceeded to the *Observer* office and, according to Bowers, closed the door and began to use insulting language.

Dr. Bowers ordered him out, and still remained seated with his back and side turned toward Wason. While he was in this position Wason struck him with all his force, knocking him forward on the table and following it with half a dozen severe blows. As soon as Bowers could recover himself Wason retreated through the front door and made tracks for the courthouse.⁴⁹

John McGonigle of the *Democrat*, who had so far remained free of the fiasco, being content to watch the Republicans destroy themselves, could stand it no longer. He offered the beleaguered undersheriff an opportunity to present his side of the story. It differed substantially from that presented by Bowers.

According to this version, the undersheriff came quietly into Bowers' office and suggested that the editor discontinue his attacks. Such a course, stated Wason, was quite reasonable now that Judge Williams had ruled in his favor. The request so enraged Bowers that he rose from his chair and swung on his adversary. Wason then "gave him a slap on the face as he approached and he ran into another room from which the door leading to the street is situated and as I was passing out he came at me again, then I 'put an illegant shanty over his eye' and left."⁵⁰

It made little matter, at this point, who was innocent or guilty. In the Republican primaries of 1892, Sheriff "Will" lost the nomination to James A. Walker, former sheriff of Monona County, Iowa, at forty-nine substantially older than Reilly and, most important of all, a Prohibitionist.

JAMES WALKER

James Walker was on all counts a solid citizen. He had moved to Ventura County in 1886 with wife Sarah (Myers) and their four children, purchased a farm in Bardsdale which he developed to citrus and established the firm of Walker & Healey, Dry Goods & Clothing on East Main Street in Ventura. He had, in addition, a good friend in the person of his father-in-law, J. K. Myers.

It was J. K. who had first appointed Walker undersheriff in Monona County, Iowa, and it was Myers' post of sheriff that Walker filled when Myers moved to Ventura in 1876. It was J. K. Myers who happily announced the arrival of his daughter, her husband and family in Ventura County and it was J. K. Myers who saw to it that Walker's impressive ten-year record as sheriff of Monona County preceded him.⁵¹

Walker, running on both the Republican and Prohibition tickets in 1892, won by a slim thirty-four vote majority over Democrat Charlebois (1,151 votes) and Populist Neel (344). It was the first year that the office of tax collector was separated from that of sheriff, a move first suggested by the Sheridans in the *Signal* of March 9, 1878. The Sheridans had hoped to save the five per cent paid to the sheriff for this service by giving the job with a slight increase in salary to the county treasurer, a move also suggested in 1892. The motion did not carry, however. The office of county tax collector was created and Andrew J. Bell elected to fill that office.

In Walker's brief two years in office, not much was happening in Ventura County—perhaps it was no coincidence. Sheriff Walker did arrest "Miss Margaret Sullivan," as reported in the *Free Press* of July 14, 1893, Miss Margaret Sullivan being "overloaded with O-be-joyful . . . and making havoc with the window lights." Miss Sullivan never appeared in the pages of the *Free Press* again. Perhaps that was no coincidence either.

By election time 1894, Will Reilly, still very much in evidence, defeated Walker in the Republican primaries. Reilly had no chance of receiving the nomination of the Prohibition Party. J. C. Brewster did and gathered to himself 420 votes which, with Reilly's 1,131 would have spelled defeat for Paul Charlebois, Democrat and Populist with 1,277 votes to his credit.

The *Free Press*, predictably not at all happy with the results, considered the combined ticket "unprincipled"—could not see how a candidate could take the Populist pledge and still regard himself as a Democrat.⁵² Neither Charlebois nor Dan Huffman, editor of the *People's Advocate*, had any problem with the concept.

PAUL C. CHARLEBOIS

Paul Charlebois, like his friend and fellow Democrat Andy Snodgrass, knew, liked and was liked by everybody. A native of Montreal, Canada, he moved to Ventura at twenty-three years of age and clerked at Einstein & Bernheim, Main Street, Ventura, at the same time that Snodgrass was clerking at Roth & Arnaz, one block away. He was involved in various commercial enterprises, at one time in partnership with John Spear, finally owning his own store on the southwest corner of Main and California Streets in Ventura.

He was married to Agnes Ayers, daughter of Robert Ayers, one of the first families to move into the Ojai. He, Agnes and their four daughters lived in a house Charlebois had built on Rancho Casitas in the Santa Ana Valley. The *Signal* of January 14, 1892, reported him to be a crack shot, Charlebois having bagged 84 quail (3 points each), 5 rabbits (2 points each), and 2 jack rabbits (5 points each), coming in second in a local shoot.

For many years he served as a trustee of the city of Ventura and, while president of the trustees, ex-officio chief of the Ventura Fire Department. He was director of the Bank of Ventura and treasurer of the Oddfellows Lodge. In 1889 he was elected Ventura County treasurer, serving four years in that capacity, until the 1892 campaign for office of sheriff in which he was defeated by James Walker.

Immediately after being sworn into office, January 7, 1895, at 12:00 o'clock at the Ventura County courthouse, Sheriff Charlebois named Andy Snodgrass—his junior in years, but many years his senior in law enforcement experience—as undersheriff. Together, with Ygnacio Rodriguez as jailer, they made an efficient team, Snodgrass making arrests and the news as often as Charlebois.

There was, for example, the April 24, 1897, murder of Constable Mac Coy Pyle of Fillmore—shot dead—bullet-hole over the right eye. As reported by Deputy Edward McCamish, a pair of burglars Pyle and McCamish had placed under arrest and were in the process of handcuffing had perpetrated the deed. After a preliminary investigation by Snodgrass and a subsequent flurry of judicious sleuthing by Charlebois, McCamish himself was placed under arrest, tried, convicted and sent to San Quentin for life.

During Sheriff Charlebois' term of office there were no scandals, no exposés, nor was Stephen Bowers in the county, the good reverend having moved to San Diego shortly after the Wason contretemps. Charlebois has the further distinction of being the first Ventura County sheriff to serve a four-year term, the result of the August 25, 1896 California State Supreme Court affirmation of the constitutionality of the County Government Act.

In addition to the above honors, Sheriff Charlebois can also claim that of winning the closest and perhaps the most exciting race for sheriff in Ventura County history. The year was 1898. The opponent was William Leachman Lewis, trustee of the city of Ventura and prominent lima bean grower. It seems that Lewis had incurred the wrath of one M. L. Wolff, a buyer of lima beans. Fergus Fairbanks tells the tale that never made the newspapers.

It was the custom of grain and bean buyers to carry a little book around with them, and in it they noted that on such and such a day they had purchased from John Doe approximately so many sacks, when threshed. . . . According to M. L. Wolff, Lewis had agreed to sell his limas to him at a certain figure. Later (still according to Wolff) Lewis sold to someone else at a higher figure. . . . After Lewis refused to sell to Wolff and the beans were delivered to the new buyer, Wolff dropped all of his work and spent most of his time driving over the County and showing the little book to any voter who would listen.⁵³

By November 11, 1898, with twenty-one of the twenty-three precincts accounted for, first Lewis, then Charlebois was told he was elected. The suspense for the voters, to say nothing of that of the candidates, was well-nigh intolerable with returns from Cuyama (14 votes) and Piru (16 votes) yet to come in. The Cuyama returns had been delayed due to "the impassable condition of the mountain trails." And as for the precinct of Piru ("the voting is done at Cuddy's place"), it was, as everyone knew, "miles and miles from nowhere."⁵⁴

A full eight days after election, the official count was tallied, checked and published. Sheriff Paul Charlebois had beaten town trustee Lewis 1,488 to 1,485, giving him a majority of three votes. Again, had the Republican party not been split into factions, Independent candidate Hardison claiming 68 votes, the Republican candidate would have won. As for the "Demopopocrats," so called in the *Free Press*, they had learned their lesson in the elections of '92 and '94.

Ventura's first newspaper, the *Signal*, came to an end during Charlebois' second term. From the halcyon days as the voice of the Democrats under W. E. Shepherd and the Sheridans, the old press had gone into a decline under Republican McLean. After suffering a variety of incarnations and as many editors, including W. D. Hobson, in 1900 the *Signal* finally succumbed, presumably from shock. As for Hobson, he survived his old enemy by fifteen years, not long enough to see himself accorded the place of honor in Sol Sheridan's *History of Ventura County*: "To him was appropriately applied the title 'Father of Ventura County,' in recogni-

tion of his unselfish and self-sacrificing efforts in behalf of the new community," etc.

It was in 1900, also, that Ventura County's own Thomas R. Bard, anti-Southern Pacific, anti-graft, anti-corruption, "a man whose granitic uprightness was unblemished by any trace of political ambition,"⁵⁵ was elected to the United States Senate, harbinger of good things to come for the county as well as for the state.

And it was about this time that the Oxnard brothers completed their sugar beet factory—the town of Oxnard began to evolve—and sin and corruption began a slow but inexorable movement across the Santa Clara River. April 8, 1898, the first three saloon licenses were granted to the little town, a date which may be set as the birthday of China Alley, a name to conjure with in the future story of the sheriffs of Ventura County.

The election of 1902 promised to provide almost as many thrills for county residents as had the election of 1898. W. L. Lewis, Charlebois' opponent in the previous election and Republican party favorite, had somehow lost the nomination to Edmund G. McMartin, "a new man in politics, therefore. . . [with] no ties to any faction."⁵⁶ The Republican majority had increased to 700 over the previous tally (300);⁵⁷ however, Sheriff Charlebois, with a good eight scandal-free years to his credit, had the incumbent's advantage.

And while the battle for sheriff's seat occupied center stage, the real coup was to be the unseating of the "Big Boss" of the Republican party, Superior Court Judge Benjamin Tully Williams. It was Judge Williams who, in 1892, had exonerated Sheriff Reilly and Undersheriff Wason of the charges brought against them by the district attorney. And it was Judge Williams who had decided for some eighteen years "who should and who should not be nominated at the County Conventions," according to Fergus Fairbanks, who again provides us with the hidden scenario.⁵⁸

The problem was, there was no man brave enough to openly oppose the man who so obviously enjoyed all the innate and acquired perquisites of his hitherto unchallenged position. "It was a delicate situation," Fairbanks was to recall many years later. "No one wanted to be in Williams' bad books." The solution to the problem was an ingenious one and a credit to the labyrinthine legal minds that hatched it.

The first priority was to locate a worthy opponent to Williams, an opponent acceptable to Democrats as well as to Republicans. This opponent would, in fact, be nominated by the Democrats at their convention and run on the Democratic ticket. He would, however, be fully supported by those Republicans eager to displace Williams. A suitable candidate, County Court Judge Felix W. Ewing, was located, he was nominated and he was in

the running as of the close of the Democratic convention. The question was, would it work?

While it was not quite the stuff myths are made of, the election promised to be good news copy and the *Free Press* had no intention of again waiting eight days for the final results. A delegation from the *Free Press* contacted bird fancier Ed Mercer and arranged to have the returns from "far shut-in Cuyama and Piru" brought in by carrier pigeon! And this plan did work.

Piru Pigeon (90+ miles) arrived at Mercer's roost at 9:00 a.m. the morning after election day, voting returns intact. Mr. Cuyama Pigeon (80 miles), who had lost his bearings in the mountain fog, arrived one hour later, also with returns intact, but personally quite out of sorts.

He didn't know what he had tied under his wing and didn't care for the anxious crowd at the *Free Press* office. All he knew was that he had neither worms nor corn under his Kangaroo-shaped breast and he didn't give a rap whether Smith or Jones was elected.⁵⁹

It was neither Smith, nor Jones, nor Charlebois who won the 1902 election for sheriff of Ventura County. It was the newcomer, Edmund G. McMartin, winning with a margin of 605 votes. Those loyal to Charlebois claimed the win was due to "the throwing out of defective Democratic ballots," but the numbers failed to support their considerably less than definitive claim.

Mr. Cerf and other good judges say . . . good Democratic ballots were lost in the county because of wrong stamping. These ballots, under the law, are illegal and the election officers threw them out. It is estimated there were 150 such ballots in the county. There may have been more. At any rate there were a considerable number.⁶⁰

And the Honorable Felix W. Ewing upset the ex-Honorable B. T. Williams with a margin of 637 votes, defeating the big boss of the Republican party 2,005 to 1,368.

No man, not even the most enthusiastic opponent, thought for a moment that defeat would be such an overwhelming landslide. The figures as they came in were simply stunning.⁶¹

It was the end of an era. The giants were falling in Ventura County as soon they would be falling in the state of California itself.

Sheriff McMartin was the last man to be elected sheriff of Ventura County on a partisan ticket. In 1910, Hiram Johnson (like Bard, anti-Southern Pacific, anti-graft, and anti-corruption, but, unlike Bard, possessed of a fair amount of political ambition) was elected governor of California in an overwhelming landslide. It was a triumph for middle-class pro-

gressives, a triumph that could never have happened without the gadflies—Fremont Older of the San Francisco *Bulletin*, W. E. Shepherd, John, Ed and Sol Sheridan of the Ventura *Signal*, H. G. McLean and Stephen Bowers of the Ventura *Free Press*—goading the electorate into a state of political consciousness while goading their victims into a condition of professional collapse.

Johnson's promised reforms began immediately. In eighty-five days both houses of the legislature passed more than eight hundred bills as well as twenty-three amendments to the state constitution. In a special election of November 1911, all but one of the constitutional amendments were approved by the voters of California. Hence, in 1911, county offices in the state of California were declared non-partisan, women were given the vote, the list was endless.

Barely had the dust settled from this spate of legislative frenzy than it started again. It was this legislative session of 1913 that introduced the Red Light Abatement Bill, one of the most seriously contested of all the proposed reforms. Concern centered, humanely of course, on the thousands of women who would be thrown out of work. By December of 1914, however, the act became effective; Sheriff McMartin and his successors were now able to arrest "soiled doves" for something more substantial than drunkenness or disturbing the peace.

EPILOGUE

Today's sheriff, John V. Gillespie, prefers not to state his political affiliation. It is, he says, irrelevant in today's situation. And today's situation is light years distant from Sheriff Peterson's Ventura County of 1873. From 1 sheriff serving 3,500 county residents, the Ventura County Sheriff's Department has grown to include 1 sheriff; 1 undersheriff; 2 assistant sheriffs; 1 chief of court services; 6 commanders; 29 lieutenants; 59 sergeants; 122 senior deputies; 292 deputies; 2 sheriff's pilots plus 260 non-sworn personnel—and 3 police dogs—serving an estimated 589,500 people.⁶²

To elect this sheriff, there are 294,942 registered voters in 635 precincts; in 1873 there were 608 registered voters, 8 precincts. Sheriff Peterson also collected the taxes, as did Sheriffs Stone, Miller, Detroy, Snodgrass and Reilly. Today, Catherine E. Johnston and a staff of 22 full-time, 15 part-time employees perform this service.⁶³

In 1903, Sheriff McMartin's income consisted of a salary of \$4,200 per annum plus ".25/mile traveled in executing warrant of arrest; for taking prisoners to magistrate or jail." Could he even faintly comprehend today's

departmental budget of \$38,800,500? Or computerized emergency responses, computerized records of fingerprints, the multiplicity of devices making it, as Gillespie says, "hardly fair to the crooks anymore"?⁶⁴

The fourth estate has changed considerably in the past one hundred years as well. There is only one major medium for dissemination of the written word in the city of Ventura today. That medium is the *Ventura County Star-Free Press*. Editor Julius Gius is not entirely free from bias, for that is not humanly possible. He does, however, profess impartiality and confine his opinions to the editorial page.

Sheriff John V. Gillespie will be running for election on a non-partisan ballot in the primaries of June 1986. His relationship with the *Star-Free Press* is a friendly relationship and for that he can thank an excellent record, a well-functioning system of law enforcement—and his lucky stars.

NOTES

¹ *Santa Barbara Times*, as quoted in *Ventura Signal*, January 11, 1873.

² *Ventura Signal*, December 28, 1872.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Thompson, Thomas & West, Albert A. *History of Santa Barbara & Ventura Counties*. Oakland, California: Thompson & West, 1883, p. 359.

⁵ Morrison, J. H. *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 4, August 1962, p. 6

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Thompson & West, p. 358.

⁸ Hobson, W. D., "History of Ventura County," *Ventura Signal*, July 8, 1876.

⁹ *Ventura Signal*, February 22, 1873.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Morrison, p. 6.

¹³ Sheriff Twist was stabbed near to death while attempting, with a posse of 200, to persuade Powers and his gang to quit Den's San Antonio Ranch and to desist rustling his cattle. It took the U. S. Marines to finally persuade Powers to move on.

¹⁴ As related by "a partner of Martin" and quoted in Thompson & West, p. 361.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Thompson & West, p. 365.

¹⁷ Until 1982, the only photograph of Sheriff Peterson in the Ventura County Historical Museum was one which had been worn around the neck of a "popular Ventura county belle," who "thought a great deal of Mr. Peterson." The story and the photo were given to E. M. Sheridan, curator of the Pioneer Museum.

¹⁸ *Ventura Signal*, July 12, 1873.

¹⁹ Granger, L. D. *Reminiscences of the Trial of F. A. Sprague and Others Under the Indictment for Murder of T. W. More*. December 1879.

²⁰ Outland, Charles F. This and the preceding Outland quote are from "The More Murder: A New Look," an unpublished manuscript.

- ²¹ As quoted by Cary Sterling, *Ojai Valley News*, February 10, 1980.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ An unfortunate choice of words, given the circumstances.
- ²⁴ *Ventura Signal*, September 4, 1877.
- ²⁵ Hobson, as foreman of the coroner's jury, had attempted a citizen's arrest of Charles McCart. McCart's boots matched one of the five pair of prints leading from the body of T. W. More. On the charge of "assaulting a cripple," Hobson acquitted himself quite capably in the *Free Press* of October 6, 1877.
- ²⁶ Gidney, Brooks & Sheridan. *History of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties*. Chicago, Illinois: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1917, p. 370.
- ²⁷ *Ventura Free Press*, August 5, 1878.
- ²⁸ Sheridan, E. M. *Ventura Post*, October 23, 1921.
- ²⁹ *Ventura County Star*, April 27, 1929.
- ³⁰ *Ventura Signal*, April 2, 1881.
- ³¹ *Ventura Signal*, January 7, 1882.
- ³² *Ventura Signal*, January 6, 1883.
- ³³ *Ventura Free Press*, April 27, 1878, defense of Sheriff Stone.
- ³⁴ *Ventura Signal*, August 30, 1879.
- ³⁵ *Ventura Free Press*, October 22, 1886.
- ³⁶ *Daily Free Press*, October 18, 1888.
- ³⁷ McGonigle as quoted in *Daily Free Press*, November 11, 1888.
- ³⁸ *Daily Free Press*, October 13, 1888.
- ³⁹ *Daily Free Press*, November 7, 1888.
- ⁴⁰ *Ventura Free Press*, April 11, 1889.
- ⁴¹ *Ventura Free Press*, November 28, 1884.
- ⁴² *Ventura Free Press*, December 5, 1884.
- ⁴³ *Ventura Vidette*, July 13, 1889; August 24, 1889; August 31, 1889.
- ⁴⁴ *Ventura Vidette*, December 21, 1889.
- ⁴⁵ Sheridan, E. M. *Ventura County Star*, October 11, 1926.
- ⁴⁶ *Ventura Democrat*, October 25, 1890.
- ⁴⁷ Outland, Charles F. *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, November 1958, p. 4.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- ⁵¹ *Ventura Free Press*, April 2, 1886.
- ⁵² *Ventura Free Press*, November 6, 1894.
- ⁵³ Fairbanks, Fergus. *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 1, November 1961, p. 4.
- ⁵⁴ *Ventura Free Press*, November 7, 1902.
- ⁵⁵ Watkins, T. H. *California: An Illustrated History*. New York: American Legacy Press, 1983, p. 285.
- ⁵⁶ *Ventura Free Press*, October 31, 1902.
- ⁵⁷ *Ventura Free Press*, November 7, 1902.
- ⁵⁸ Fairbanks, p. 7.
- ⁵⁹ *Ventura Free Press*, October 31, 1902.
- ⁶⁰ *Ventura Free Press*, November 7, 1902.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Annual Report*. Ventura County Sheriff's Department, 1984.

Ventura County Star-Free Press, December 6, 1985.

California Almanac. Fay, Lipow & Fay, eds. California: Presidio Press, 1985.

⁶³ Information supplied by: Olivia Carrera, Ventura County Deputy Clerk, Division of Elections; Joretta Vestal, Executive Secretary to Ventura County Tax Collector.

⁶⁴ *California Blue Book*, Compiled by the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California: State Printing Office, 1903.

Annual Report. Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff Gillespie as quoted in *Ojai Valley News*, October 13, 1985.



PARTISAN ELECTION RESULTS

Date of Election	Number of Precincts	Candidates	Party	Number of Votes	Majority
February 25, 1873	8	William B. Baker	R	254	
		Franklin L. Peterson	D	344	90
September 3, 1873	7	Franklin L. Peterson	D	294	
		John R. Stone	R	315	21
September 1, 1875	9	John R. Stone	R	521	83
		C. O'Hara	D	438	
September 5, 1877	10	C. D. Bonestal	R	558	
		Joseph M. Miller	D	601	43
September 3, 1879	10	Joseph M. Miller	D	560	
		John Barry	R	no count	
		Joseph Detroy	NCP	638	78
November 7, 1882	11	Joseph Detroy	R	531	
		Andrew J. Snodgrass	D	610	79
November 4, 1884	11	Andrew J. Snodgrass	D	860	337
		A. W. Browne	R	523	
November 2, 1886	11	Andrew J. Snodgrass	D	832	267
		E. M. Jones	R	565	
		C. H. Decker	Pro	no count	
November 6, 1888	13	Andrew J. Snodgrass	D	849	
		William H. Reilly	R	1,202	353
November 4, 1890	21	William H. Reilly	R	1,489	618
		J. Logan Kennedy	D	871	
		---- Smith	PP	47	
November 8, 1892	22	James Walker	R	1,108	
		James Walker	Pro	77	34
		Paul Charlebois	D	1,151	
		William T. Neel	PP	344	
November 6, 1894	22	William H. Reilly	R	1,131	
		J. C. Brewster	Pro	420	
		Paul Charlebois	D, PP	1,277	146
November 8, 1898	23	Paul Charlebois	D	1,488	3
		Leachman Lewis	R	1,485	
		---- Hardison	Ind	68	
November 4, 1902	30	Paul Charlebois	D	1,412	
		Edmund G. McMartin	R	2,017	605
November 6, 1906	24	Edmund G. McMartin	R	1,861	794
		Thomas S. Clark	D	1,067	
November 8, 1910	25	Edmund G. McMartin	R	2,227	1,051
		William E. Kelley	D	1,176	

R: Republican
 NCP: New Constitution Party
 Pro: Prohibition
 Ind: Independent

D: Democrat
 PP: People's Party

ABOUT THE EDITOR: With this issue of the *Quarterly*, I would like to introduce our readers to our new editor, Patricia Clark Callachor.

Pat comes to this position with excellent credentials. She received a B.A. degree in English literature, graduating with Highest Honors, from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1980. In June of the same year, she won the top award for non-fiction writing at the Santa Barbara Writers' Conference. One year later, Pat received an M.A. (Honors) in Anglo-Irish literature from University College Dublin, in Dublin, Ireland.

Pat returned to California from Ireland not only with a new degree in hand but also with an Australian husband, Michael Callachor, whom she met while studying in Ireland. Shortly after her return, Pat taught two quarters of English Composition at the University of California, Santa Barbara. While on campus, she also pursued a curriculum of literary criticism and U.S. history.

Pat is a member of a prominent Ventura County family—the Clarks. She is the daughter of James E. “Ned” Clark and Fern Bounds Clark. Her great-grandfather, Michael Hugh Clark, arrived in Ventura County in 1879; his oldest son, Tom, was county supervisor for the 3rd District for thirty-two consecutive years. His youngest son, Pat’s grandfather, was Robert E. Clark, Ventura County sheriff from 1922 to 1933, then U.S. Marshal for the district of southern California. Pat is a native daughter of California and a fourth generation county resident. For many years she acted as her father’s secretary and bookkeeper and, following his death, has been managing her section of the family ranch in Ojai.

This issue is Pat’s second effort and I am sure you will all agree that she is a valuable asset to the Ventura County Historical Society’s publication program generally and to the editorship of the *Quarterly* specifically.

KEITH FOSTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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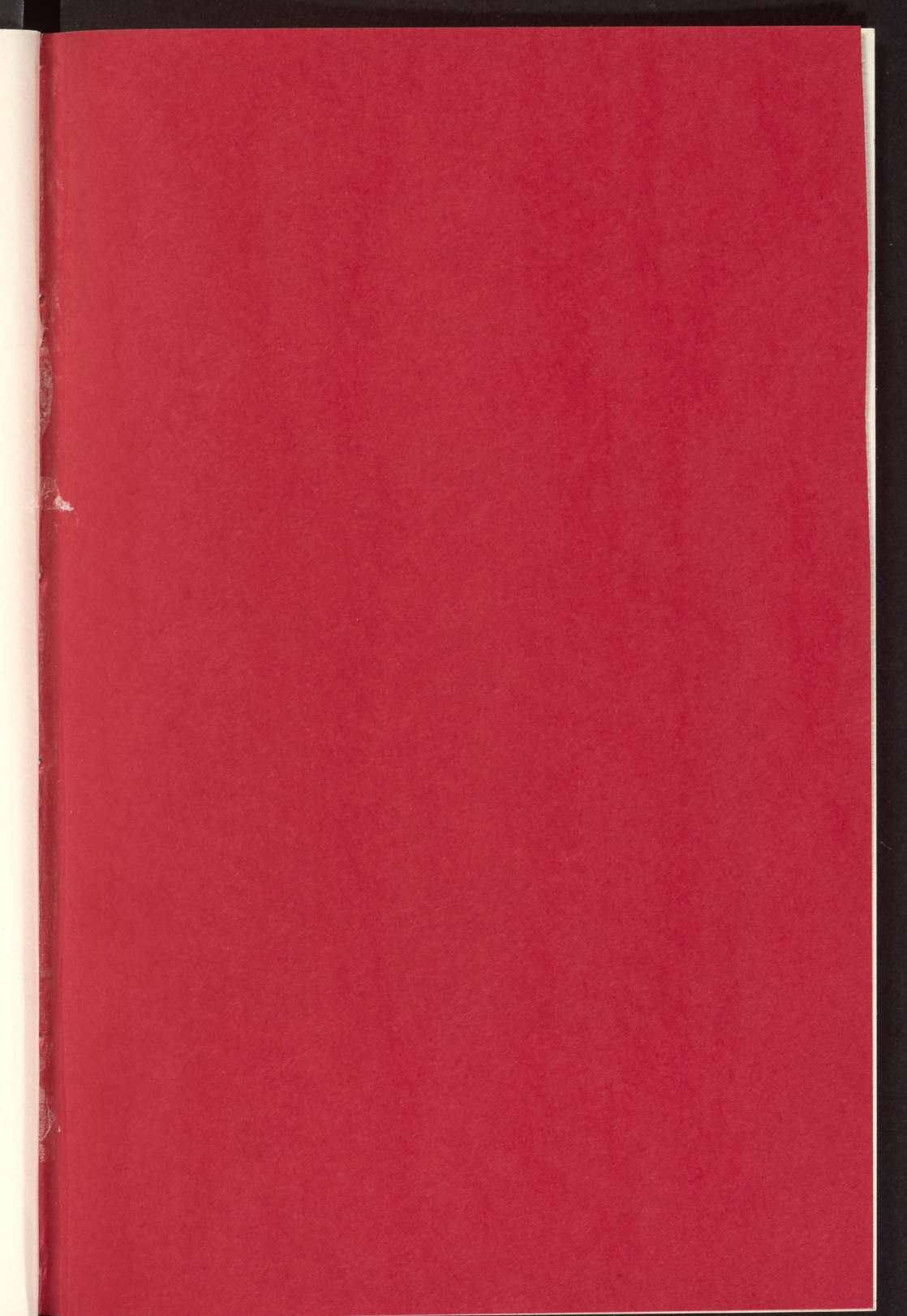
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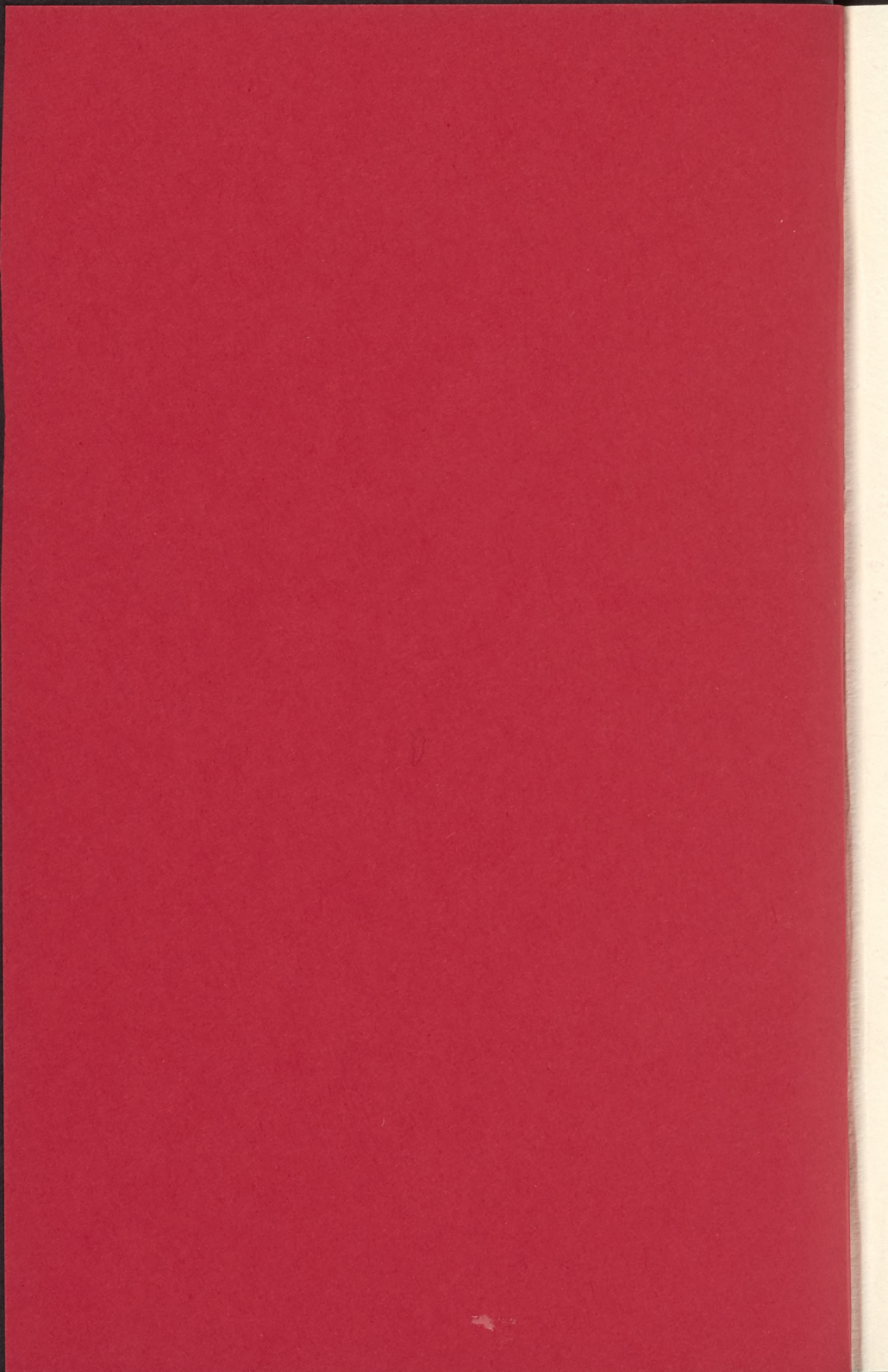
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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Cover illustration by Leslie Clark.
Pictured is the Spanish Colonial
Revival residence of authors Burn-
weit and Gwillim, 308 Santa Cruz
Street, Ventura.

Photographs from the Ventura
County Historical Museum and
Stephen A. Gwillim collections.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Richard C. Burnweit & Stephen A. Gwillim

I had the pleasure of meeting Richard and Steve when they enrolled in the class I teach at Ventura College entitled "Ventura County's Cultural and Architectural History." Both men came with a strong desire and longtime interest in architectural history. This was sparked, no doubt, by the recent restoration of their 1920s house and an avid interest in historic preservation. As part of the class curriculum, a paper on some facet of Ventura County's history was required. Each chose a style of architecture important in the development of Ventura's past—the Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival. Their manuscripts are a definite addition to the cultural history of Ventura County, and the restoration of their Spanish Colonial Revival residence on Santa Cruz Street in Ventura demonstrates their commitment to preservation.

Steve and Richard became acquainted in Upland, California where both were attending high school. Upon graduation, Steve went north to San Jose State University where he received his B.A. in Art in 1974. He went on to receive a Special Education credential and began teaching in the field of special education for the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools in 1976. An added interest for Steve has been interior design. The restoration of their home reflects his talents in creative interiors as well as historic preservation.

Richard Burnweit received his B.A. in History in 1972 from Claremont Men's College. In 1983 he obtained his M.A. in Political Science from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His thesis topic was "Californians on Capitol Hill: Professionalization in the California House Delegation in the Twentieth Century." He is currently working on his Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of California at Santa Barbara while employed as Adjunct Professor in the Political Science Department at Westmont College in Santa Barbara. He is also Assistant Director of Learning Resources at Westmont. In 1985 he received the Colin Manzer Reid Prize for the best graduate seminar paper in political science at U.C.S.B.

It is a personal delight for me to see these two excellent research projects turned into a published work by the Ventura County Historical Society. It is my hope that future student manuscripts might be published as well to show the depth of research being written on Ventura County.

JUDY TRIEM

Historical Consultant and teacher at Ventura College

VENTURA'S MISSION REVIVAL TOWN HALL

by Richard C. Burnweit

The number of Mission Revival city halls and county court-houses are, in proportion to other types of buildings reflecting the style, relatively small.¹ The city of Ventura, however, was one place where, after the turn of the century, Mission Revival architecture found expression in a newly constructed town hall. Designed by the Los Angeles architect J. H. Bradbeer, the combined town hall/library building was erected in 1903 and served the city until 1921. It was, in the words of architectural historian Tom Owens, "an up-to-date building."²

The fact that the design selected was "of the mission style of architecture," as described by the *Ventura Free-Press*, is significant, in that it was chosen over a classical design submitted to the city board of trustees by P. J. Barber and a "finely executed design" presented by "architect Starbuck."³ Just why the board selected Bradbeer's mission style design over the others remains unclear. Bradbeer had, however, submitted the plan chosen by the county Board of Supervisors for the earlier renovation of the county courthouse. This project had encompassed the addition of a Queen Anne style tower and an enlargement to the original building, which had been constructed (and presumably designed) by W. D. Hobson in 1873.⁴

J. H. Bradbeer, a Canadian based in Los Angeles, had earned a substantial reputation as the result of his prolific residential activity in the 1880s and 1890s. During this period he designed several magnificent Queen Anne style homes on Grand Avenue and in the area bounded by Downtown and Exposition Park. Bradbeer also designed several other buildings in Ventura County around the turn of the century.⁵ As the new town hall was under construction, the *Ventura Free-Press's* coverage of the work progress mentioned Bradbeer's role as architect of, in the city of Ventura, the Collins-Taylor Building, and the First National Bank Building (which actually got underway shortly after the town hall construction began in 1903). Another county project of Bradbeer's was the Santa Paula Bank Building.⁶

Of his Ventura buildings, it appears that only the town hall was rendered in the mission style. The First National Bank Building, as depicted in newspaper drawings of the architect's design, seems to combine certain Richardsonian Romanesque elements: weighty stone fac-



Ventura County Courthouse Designed and Built by W.D. Hobson, 1873.

ing and rounded arched openings along the street level windows and entrance. There is an abbreviated and suggestively gothic turret, as well. Curiously, historian Owens classifies the work as in the Beaux Arts tradition, one that, he notes, Bradbeer was comfortable working in, at least in his relatively few commercial enterprises.⁷

Just how Bradbeer, an Angeleno, came to be involved in a number of Ventura County projects remains unclear. In the case of his contemporary, architect Albert C. Martin, member of a prominent Ventura family, the call to return to his hometown to prepare the design for the 1912 neo-classical county courthouse is understandable. Martin had, by that date, established himself as a rising architect in Los Angeles. Among his major lifetime compositions are the Churrigueresque Million Dollar Theatre, 1918; the elaborate St. Vincent De Paul Roman Catholic Church, 1923-25; and his contribution to the design of the 1929 Los Angeles City Hall.

No such evidence exists to link Bradbeer with the county. A relationship of sorts did exist with contractor H. A. Giddings, as Giddings and Bradbeer worked jointly on the town hall and First National Bank Building projects in 1903. The partnership implied by the architect working with the same contractor on commercial buildings may be significant for, as Owens notes, often in that era, architects were forced to engage in joint partnership arrangements with building owners and contractors, in response to widely fluctuating boom-bust cycles. These



Ventura County Courthouse as Renovated by J.H. Bradbeer. (Note jail in background.)

arrangements, known as "speculative ladders," required that the architect put up funds to insure progress on the development; on occasion, of course, he suffered a loss if a project failed.⁸ In any event, biographical information on Bradbeer remains sketchy, even to the exclusion of birth and death dates, although it is believed he may have moved to San Francisco just prior to the 1906 earthquake and fire.⁹

In terms of the Mission Revival style Bradbeer used in designing the new town hall, its development stems from a variety of causes. Inspired by a succession of events and movements, Mission Revival derived from a groundswell of activity centered on preserving, celebrating the homely virtues of and indeed blatantly promoting—for monetary gain—the historic Franciscan missions of California's Spanish colonial period (1769-1821). This literary, preservationist and commercialistic drive encouraged architectural critics of the 1890s to apply this historical imagery to a distinct California style. Tied in with this response was the recognition that the evolving style addressed the natural setting of the state—in its geography and climate—as it conformed readily to the state's low-lying hillside terrain, gentle valleys and the ideal Mediterranean climate.

Promoters of real estate, tourist, agricultural and even oil development interests emphasized the highly romanticized historical antecedents of the largely mythic mission period as well as the incom-

parably paradistic quality of the state's weather conditions and natural resources, to market especially the southern section of the state to tourists and prospective immigrants all across the country. Indeed, the impresario of the southern California renaissance, Charles F. Lummis, noted that the missions' historical presence (and the Ramona mythology that went with it) was estimated to be worth more than the assets of citrus farming, oil and even climate in providing a highly marketable commodity worth many millions of dollars.¹⁰

Strangely coexisting with this promotional thrust, proponents of the emergent Arts and Crafts movement also celebrated the charmingly monastic mission way of life. To these critics of an industrialized and harshly urban-centered culture, the simplicity of the padres' and mission Indians' lives, however far removed their image of it may have been from the truth, provided a linkage point to their own quest for a more virtuous lifestyle. Spurning the garishness of Victorian architecture and the machines that helped produce it, Arts and Crafts critics appreciated the "honesty" of the Indians' hand-crafted mission structures, as well as the padres' obvious lack of formal architectural training. The simple forms of the old mission church edifices were highly appealing to Arts and Crafts proponents particularly as they suggested retreat into an idyllic, if dreamy, past. Thus interest in the missions generated from widely divergent quarters, but with the result that these influences would find expression, architecturally, in the Mission Revival movement.

While the Franciscan missions provided a theme upon which this architectural style was to be based, an important amalgamating influence was the Richardsonian Romanesque style then receiving countrywide popularity. Emphasizing the use of towers, rounded arched entryways and the weightiness of rough ashlar masonry stone facings, this eastern American style was blended, to some extent, with old mission stylistic elements to give expression to the emergent Mission Revival style. Perhaps the most important transitional project combining the two themes was the Leland Stanford Jr. University in Palo Alto. Designed by the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge in 1886, the Stanford campus sought, as its donor hoped, to serve as an expression of a "native California architecture." Not only did the overall design reflect the theme of one-story arcaded buildings surrounding the traditional mission interior court, but also such old Spanish stylistic features as red tile roofs and prominent bell towers derived from the mission period graced the campus. Harmonizing quite convincingly with these mission elements were rusticated stone masonry, squat (and often

paired) columns with foliated capitals and an emphasis on massive walls, all Richardsonian elements to be sure. Overall, this coalescence of forms and elements received generally favorable public response. As Karen J. Weitze notes, "Continued publicity of the campus helped to generate further mission designs."¹¹

In anticipation of the 1893 Chicago Exposition, a number of California architects, including San Franciscans A. Page Brown, Willis Polk and Samuel Newsom, incorporated prominent mission features into their respective design entries for the building set to represent the state of California. The awkwardness of many of these designs reflects, of course, the earliest and understandably roughest attempts of young professionals to develop an architectural style expressive of the region. However, many of the features utilized in these early designs continue to assert the style as it was refined.

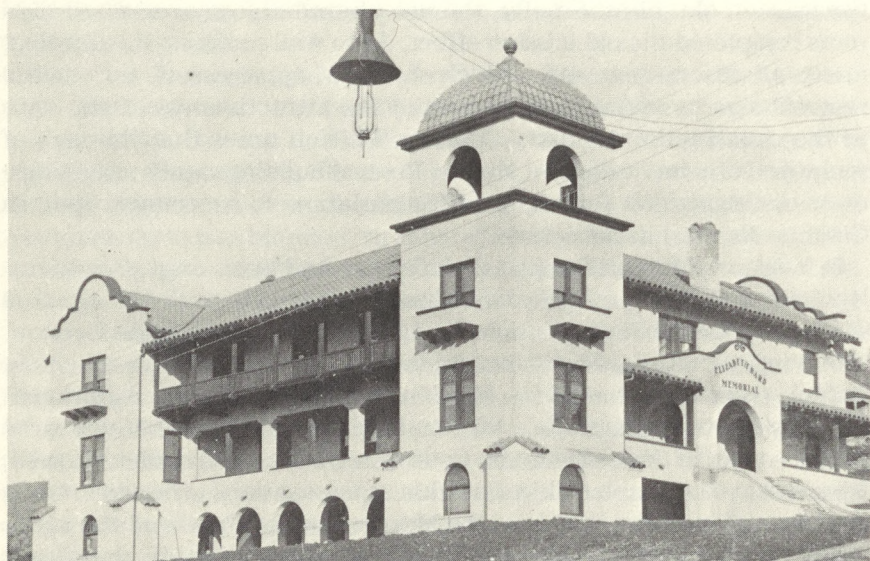
For example, in many of the Mission Revival buildings designed after the mid-1890s, bell towers, sometimes rounded but just as frequently topped with low pitched hipped gabled roofs with red tiles, were standard features. Perhaps even more distinct to the style was the scalloped gable or parapet, a curved adornment seemingly essential to nearly all buildings rendered in the style. An elaborate touch to many mission buildings was the quatrefoil window, a star-shaped or rounded aperture that carries strong ecclesiastical overtones, as if taken directly from the mission churches. Finally, the use of arched loggias and red tiled roofs completed the old mission effect. As to wall surfaces, the development of stucco-concrete, which had an apparent if not actual resemblance to adobe, complemented the attractiveness of the style to the construction industry. Marcus Whiffen notes that the lack of sculptural ornamentation on Mission Revival buildings ranks as its single most distinguishing feature in differentiation to successive Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.¹²

In Ventura, Mission Revival architecture had been most prominently realized in Selwyn L. Shaw's Elizabeth Bard Memorial Hospital, a scalloped gabled building commanding a predominant hillside location. The hospital was made distinct by its frontal tiled bell tower which, in fact, resembled that of the Mission San Buenaventura. Additionally, early photographs show a Mission Revival fire house that was sited on the corner of Santa Clara and California Streets. It is evident as well, from early photograph collections, that at least several other downtown commercial buildings (such as the Mercer Garage) featured the style.

The 1903 town hall/library contained a number of significant distinguishing mission stylistic features. Dominated by a massive but

relatively short red tiled roof bell tower (with admittedly Romanesque columns and ornamentation), the Bradbeer design incorporated a scalloped parapet and quatrefoil window on the facade as well as a front colonnade of three arches. A second, indeed even squatter version of the main tower extended above the side door of the building (the "LIBRARY" door—the entry in front was designated "CITY HALL") at the back of the structure on California Street. It, too, had a red tiled hipped roof and, it may be noted, the roof line between the towers consisted of a coiled scalloped parapet.

One design feature provided by the architect on the newspaper published drawing but never apparent in subsequent photographs of the building were four frontal portholes running along the base of the second story. The building surface appears relatively smooth in photographs and reportedly was made of "staff [a tough plaster surface] and resembling that of the Bard Hospital."¹³ While the utilization of the mission design may have been an exceptional stylistic departure for architect Bradbeer (at least in terms of verifiable projects he worked on in Ventura County), its adoption by the board of trustees resulted in the creation of a handsome new structure on the city's main thoroughfare and noted the fact that in terms of its development, the city was turning some significant corners as well.



Elizabeth Bard Memorial Hospital, Ventura.



Ventura's Mission Revival Fire House.

Incorporated as the town of San Buenaventura on March 10, 1866, in the then county of Santa Barbara, the town that became known simply as Ventura was the principal city in the new county of Ventura, said county operative as of January 1, 1873. City fathers, originally meeting in private homes and then at Spears Hall, by 1883 were prepared to commit the growing town to the construction of a permanent town hall/library structure (the public library had been founded in 1874). As the *Ventura Signal* of October 27, 1883 noted, the anticipated construction was heralded with great enthusiasm.

Carpenter Charles Cooper and a corps of assistants have commenced tearing down the ramshackle rookeries on the corner of Main and California streets preparatory to erection of our new and much needed town hall.¹⁴

When completed several months later, the town hall, with its Greek Revival facade, tin roof and brick construction became, in the words of the *Free-Press*, "a town landmark."¹⁵ Original plans anticipated construction of a second story on the building in 1885 which, for reasons left unexplained, was not accomplished.



Main Street, Ventura, 1885. Ventura's first town hall is on the right.

By 1903, the building was considered outgrown and, as one editorial writer noted, "is not sufficiently large for the needs of the town."¹⁶ To that end, on January 21, voters approved \$8,000 in bonds "to remodel" the structure and the board of trustees began advertising for building designs from architects.¹⁷ Inspection of one of these announcements (kept among city council minutes) reveals that they featured a photograph of the old building's Greek Revival facade and carried the express instruction that "alterations [were] to consist of the remodeling of the exterior and interior of the present building and the addition of a story for library purposes."¹⁸ Officially then, the board called for a building rehabilitation but obviously reconsidered that course after funding was approved and architectural plan bids submitted for, in fact, the original structure was torn down and replaced. Fragmentary evidence for the razing of the original structure comes from newspaper accounts of the opening of the cornerstone of the 1883 building (which the contractor H. A. Giddings did by August 7, 1903).¹⁹ A review of Sanborn maps of the structures show a substantially larger building in 1906 replacing the early town hall, which lends further credence to the idea that the Bradbeer building was entirely new.²⁰



Architect Bradbeer's Proposal for the Town Hall/Library (Ventura **Free-Press**, 6/26/1903).

Having selected Bradbeer's mission style plan on June 24, the board advertised for bids "for plans and specifications [again] for remodeling the Town Hall" on July 6, 1903.²¹ By July 21, bids had been received from the firms of Parrish and Gourley (\$7,285), H. A. Giddings (\$6,717) and Myers and Abplanalp (\$7,832). As low bidder, Giddings received the contract.

In December, as the project neared completion, the board held a special meeting at which it entertained bids for the California Street sidewalk. As the *Ventura Free-Press* observed in its article of December 4,

Giddings bid 12 1/2 cents per square foot on the walk and gutter and 30 cents per running foot for the curb. Harry Roberts bid \$1.79 per lineal foot for the same work. After some discussion and figuring, Trustee Wilde moved that the contract be given to Mr. Giddings. Mr. Giddings hastily thanked the Board and departed. A continuance of the figuring disclosed the fact that Mr. Giddings' was the higher bid.

At the same meeting, Tom Ruiz was awarded the contract to furnish the town hall with electric light fixtures at \$272.00.²²

By December 11 the board, consisting of members Collins, Shaw, Vickers and Wilde, met for the first time in the new building, although it was not until January that the architect formally presented the plans for the new structure to the board. In the interim, arrangements were made at the behest of a Mrs. Lincoln to increase the building's insurance from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Further, representatives from the library board sought funding for library furnishings, at one point the city board of trustees seeing fit to allow the library trustees \$700.²³

When the facility was finally occupied in January 1904, the *Ventura Free-Press* celebrated the occasion with a detailed description of the building's interior layout. Among the building's best features were city offices that were "bright and sunny...and...equipped with fireplaces and handsome mantels."²⁴ Useful as the new edifice may have been to eager Venturans waiting to move in, the *Free-Press* sounded a strangely ominous prediction—even before the building was occupied.

It may be that in the future Ventura will need a larger and more commodious city hall, but for years to come the present handsome structure will suffice all its needs and will be not only a credit to the town, but one of our showplaces for the strangers who visit our city.²⁶



Ventura's Mission Revival Town Hall/Library, 1903-1921.

That prophecy was borne out by 1920, when there was, again, a surge of support for the erection of a completely new city hall. Among those concerned with the issue, E. P. Foster most notably assisted in providing for the relocation of the combined city hall/library to a new structure to be built on Main Street between Fir and Chestnut Streets. Completed in 1921, it was noted by the *Free-Press* that through Foster's continuous generosity, even floodlights were being provided for the new city hall lawn.²⁷ Ventura, it should be noted, was on the verge of its most spectacular growth period (increasing in population from its 1920 estimate of approximately 4,000 to well over 11,000 by 1926).²⁸ Perhaps Foster's interest in burnishing the city's image is only indicative of the widespread eagerness with which many Venturans pushed downtown development. At any rate, when the city vacated its Mission Revival town hall, little thought was given to maintaining the structure that had served the city government for a mere seventeen years.

In fact, as the city board considered bids for purchase of the building (and, more importantly, for acquisition of its valuable lot), Foster's representative on the board, Randolph, opposed sale to E. S. Trayler of the Bank of Camarillo (who bid \$13,600 at the February 21 meeting). In selling "under hurried conditions," Foster feared new owners would not move quickly enough in "erecting a new building...on the lot where

the city hall now stands, worthy of this city and reflecting credit on the city by people passing by or coming here to reside."²⁹ Foster's intuition proved correct, as it was at least three to four years before the town hall was razed and the Ventura Hotel built in its place. (This four-story structure is still standing on the corner of California and Main Streets.)



Main Street, Ventura, 1909. Town hall is on the right.

That Ventura's Mission Revival town hall was viewed as essentially out-of-date and of diminished value in 1920 reflected to some extent the general attitude of many towards the Mission Revival style of architecture by this time. Although providing stylistic antecedents for the emerging Spanish Colonial Revival movement, the Mission Revival style fell from favor for a variety of reasons. While a full discussion of the debate lies beyond the scope of this paper, scholarly judgment ranges from the avowedly caustic criticism of the style by Harold Kirker to a far more salutary assessment by Paul Gleye. Gleye places the mission style into an evolving historical context within a broad Mediterranean tradition in California architecture. Kirker cites the "failure" of the style, indeed the idea that the simplicity and charm of the old missions could never be transferred to meet the requirements of late nineteenth century urban architecture.³⁰ Gleye points out that while Mission Revival may not have offered the lasting "California" style

originally hoped for, it nonetheless remained as long as any other style adopted within the last century and proved more influential than many others in years to come. Gleye summarizes the argument well in noting that 'in the 1980's,...[Mission Revival] still exerts an influence on architecture in Southern California, in the continuing tradition of red tile roofs and stucco walls.³¹

NOTES

¹Karen J. Weitze cites the fact that in spite of architect James Knox Taylor's enthusiastic announcement in 1909 that the style would be implemented "wherever Southern California public buildings shall be erected," very few courthouses were ever built in the style. She notes that no state buildings ever were and, indeed, there are few citations of Mission Revival city halls in her outstanding treatise, *California's Mission Revival*. (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1983), pp. 105-107.

²Interview with Tom Owens, architectural historian, Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles, California, January 11, 1985.

³Ventura *Free-Press*, June 17, 1903.

⁴Sheridan, Sol. N. *History of Ventura County* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1926), p. 300.

⁵Owens.

⁶Ventura *Free-Press*, June 19, 1903.

⁷Owens.

⁸Owens.

⁹Owens.

¹⁰Weitze, p. 15.

¹¹Weitze, p. 23.

¹²Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969), p. 213.

¹³Ventura *Free-Press*, June 19, 1903.

¹⁴Ventura *Signal*, October 27, 1883.

¹⁵Ventura *Free-Press*, March 6, 1903.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ventura *Free-Press*, January 8, 1904.

¹⁸“Notice to Architects,” *Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the City of San Buenaventura*, June 1903.

¹⁹*Ventura Free-Press*, August 7, 1903.

²⁰Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: Ventura, California 1886, 1906 (San Francisco: Sanborn Map Company).

²¹*Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the City of San Buenaventura*, July 6, 1903.

²²*Ventura Free-Press*, November 27, 1903.

²³*Ventura Free-Press*, December 4, 1903.

²⁴*Ventura Free-Press*, December 11, 1903.

²⁵*Ventura Free-Press*, January 7, 1904.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ventura Free-Press*, February 16, 1921.

²⁸Sheridan, p. 354.

²⁹*Ventura Free-Press*, February 23, 1921.

³⁰Kirker, Harold. *California's Architectural Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1973), p. 123.

³¹Gleye, Paul. *The Architecture of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, 1981), p. 85.

THE SPANISH HOUSE FOR VENTURA Spanish Colonial Revival Homes of the 1920s

by Stephen A. Gwillim

In the central areas of Ventura, small to medium-sized Spanish houses are, as Reyner Banham notes, "all around us...like the weather."¹ Built in the 1920s, these houses are properly designated Spanish Colonial Revival style. Few give much thought to their historical significance; most consider them architecturally quaint or even cute. Actually, they have played a major part in Ventura's housing history, as well as in that of numerous other southern California towns and cities.

Prior to the 1920s, most of the private residences in the city were located west of Sanjon Road and the Barranca. These houses were constructed mainly of wood framing and siding and of the California bungalow or the Victorian style of architecture. The 1920s, however, were a period of fantastic growth for Ventura and it was at this time that the familiar modest stucco houses, often topped with red tile roofs, proliferated.

The Ventura *Free-Press*, long a booster of Ventura and Venturans, in 1921 identified one reason for the city's rapid growth:

Ventura has such an excellent municipal wharf that she can handle any kind of shipping...the main coast line of the Southern Pacific makes it possible to obtain good rail service, and...Ventura is ripe for industrial development in spite of some who do not want to disturb the tranquility of the community.²

Integral to this industrial development was the sale in 1920 of the Lloyd Company lease to the Associated Oil Company.³ By 1925 Associated Oil Company's first real success came with the drilling of Lloyd No. 9 and No. 16, an event which Sol Sheridan claims put the Ventura field on the map.⁴ As this contemporary commentator noted,

The development of the Ventura Field has made the old town of San Buenaventura a city, trebling the population in 5 years and starting it on a career of growth that will make it an industrial center, a seaport and one of the leading resort paradises of the world....As of January

1926, the Associated Oil Company's Lloyd no. 22 is the largest producing oil well in California.⁵

And, as Lynn Brady added, it was "oil fields, plus the building of better roads connecting Ventura to Los Angeles and other surrounding towns [that] resulted in [the] tremendous building activity."⁶

The Ventura *Free-Press* continued to be filled with articles reflecting a climate of boosterism, calling for an increase of interest in the Ventura area as a place to visit and to live.

With the oil development at the very backdoor of the city and in one instance in the front yard, Ventura enjoys an enviable future. The agricultural backcountry has always made it a "good town" from the business standpoint, but oil activity is going to make it border on a boom town of the more steady type.⁷

There were all-year campaigns to raise people's interest in settling in this "ideal" community. Blatantly exaggerating the climate and natural amenities of the area, the *Free-Press* commanded the prospective immigrant to

get out where you have a chance to breathe deeply, where you can see the sun rise and set, where the green grass has a chance to push its way through the earth and flowers not found in florists' windows with a price ticket on them. Get out where the children can grow strong and stay good.⁸

As prospective residents arrived and asked if they could locate in this ideal spot, they were promptly told there were no houses, but that these conditions would be remedied as fast as builders could build new homes.⁹

The *Free-Press* further urged those already located in the city to "TAKE THAT STEP NOW! OWN A HOME OF YOUR OWN IN BEAUTIFUL VENTURA," emphasizing "you don't need a lot of money." Playing up the values of home ownership, this article continued:

The man who owns his own home is a better neighbor and a better citizen. His home life is happier; his freedom from money troubles much greater; his ambition in life much stronger. Start on the road to peace and contentment today!¹⁰

One 1925 account suggest that residents

sit down tonight or tomorrow and write some person in the East all about this section. Tell them the truth--all about the oil field, the walnut, bean and fruit crops, the climate, the growth of the city, etc. Then mail it!¹¹

Not surprisingly, Ventura's population soared and as the population soared, so did the need for additional housing. New subdivisions and tracts were developed in response to this need.

The front page of the January 20, 1926 issue of the *Ventura Free-Press* listed several new housing tracts and subdivisions, showing the number of new homes added in each. Among those included were Simpson, McElrea Heights, Oceanview, Langmore Terrace, Hobson Heights, Floral Park and Pierpont Bay. Approximately 1,000 new building lots had been added in new subdivisions in 1925.¹² The majority of these houses were modest two-bedroom homes built on narrow city lots, except for those in the Hobson and McElrea Heights subdivisions, which were larger and sited on more exclusive locations in the hills. At first these stucco houses all seem similar, as though they were pressed from a cookie cutter, but closer inspection shows that they possess interesting and varying stylistic elements.



Representative Spanish Colonial Revival Style, 420 Jordan Avenue, Ventura.

It is this type of house that falls into the broad category called Spanish Colonial Revival, which includes a wide range of stylistic elements. Seemingly derived from the Spanish colonial period, this broad style is not a true revival style as there are no real prototypes to be found with all of these elements included in them. In fact, the architectural elements that were left from the colonial period are meager.¹³ The Spanish ranch house with its interior patio and low pitched roof and its in-town counterpart, the flat-roofed adobe, though well suited to the California environment, were rapidly replaced by the American settlers. These Americans changed the predominant style of architecture to the "elegant and substantial dwellings" they had been used to.¹⁴ Therefore, the simple white-washed adobe of the Spanish colonial period had largely vanished by the 1880s.

Near the end of the century, a new interest in restoring the old missions that had fallen into disrepair led to a new appreciation of California's Spanish heritage. This interest in the Hispanic culture was reinforced, if not inspired, by the national euphoria preceding the construction of the Panama Canal in 1903. Though the missions, in most cases, were primitive and crudely constructed, they became the inspiration that led to a new architectural style that was seen as a potentially lasting California form of architecture. Thus the Mission Revival style was distinguished by such elements as the scalloped dormer and parapet that gave a frontal image of a mission facade, arched arcades, quatrefoil windows, bell towers that were fully tiled with hip roofs and overhangs and smooth stucco wall surfaces. This style was heavy and lent itself best to large structures such as railroad stations, schools and hotels. There were some successful homes built in this style; for example, in Santa Barbara's Crocker Row (1894-1895).

Mission Revival passed from favor by 1912 as it did not offer the enduring California architecture hoped for.¹⁵ Still in search of something that represented California's architectural heritage, climate and terrain, architects began to turn for inspiration to traditional Spanish architecture, which derived from Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance cultures.¹⁶ Virginia and Lee McAlester have come to label this broad sweep "Spanish Eclectic."¹⁷ This wide range of influences gave architects a variety of stylistic ideas from which to draw, but the overall choice was Mediterranean, as it could be easily adapted to the California environment and lifestyle.

The simple ranch house and mission churches still served as inspirational models for the creation of architecture in the state, but an added



Crocker Row House, 2010 Garden Street, Santa Barbara.

element was the sophistication and developed concepts contributed by several well-known architects who sought to create a style that would be both functional and reminiscent of the past and faraway places.

Chief among these architects was Bertram Goodhue who brought a florid style based on Spanish and Mexican architecture called Churrigueresque to the state in his design of the California State Building at the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. Churrigueresque could be adapted to any size of building, but it was best suited to large structures such as department stores and movie theaters (such as the Million Dollar Theater in Los Angeles). As in the California State Building, the principal stylistic element was the opulently carved stone frontispiece usually surrounding entrances and windows and set in contrast to large, plain plastered walls. After the Exposition, this style was adopted in many urban communities and in some places, such as Fullerton, cities adopted policies requiring all public and semi-public building to adhere to the style. This planned community aspect was also featured in Ojai where in 1916-1918 E. D. Libbey influenced the town to change its name from Nordhoff to the original name of the Spanish land grant and to change the town image into something which was "native" to



*Churrigueresque Ornamentation
on California State Building,
San Diego.*

California—namely, Mission Revival with, as David Gebhard notes, “a topping of Andalusian.”¹⁸

Another key Spanish Colonial Revivalist, Carleton Monroe Winslow, also worked on the San Diego Exposition—under Goodhue’s direction. In 1930 Winslow designed the Ojai Presbyterian Church in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with its tower being influenced by Goodhue.¹⁹ The Ojai church incorporates many elements popular at the time, such as simple stucco wall surfaces with arched arcades and multilevel low pitched tiled roofs with no overhang. Additionally, the tower has little ornamentation, a pointed shape and a tiled dome.

In addition to Winslow, a number of architects working on Spanish Colonial Revival buildings in Santa Barbara furthered the movement. One of them was James Osborne Craig who, in designing the Bernard Hoffman House and the El Paseo shopping plaza under Winslow, “set the stage for the popularity of the Hispanic revival in Santa Barbara.”²⁰ Craig’s designs captured the image and flavor of the style with simplicity and intimacy, “favoring a central courtyard surrounded by small village buildings with sharply angled rooflines.”²¹ Craig’s wife Mary assumed his practice after his death in 1922. Her designs were similar to her husband’s, her major contributions including a group of single-family Spanish Colonial Revival houses on Plaza Rubio facing Mission Santa Barbara. One critic considers these cottages to be



Ojai Presbyterian Church, Ojai.

a highly successful example of urban planning and design.²²

Just up the street from the Craig cottages stands one house among many in Santa Barbara designed by George Washington Smith, probably the best known architect and strongest individual influence upon the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Smith's training consisted of a formal education in architecture acquired at Harvard School of Architecture in addition to the same in painting at the Julian Academy of Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, where he studied impressionism, cubism and Fauvism.²³ He travelled throughout the Mediterranean and picked up a highly individualized interpretation of Hispanic architecture in his travels.

While Smith was still trying to promote his painting career, he built a house for himself in Montecito, now known as the Smith-Heberton House (1916), drawing on sources from rural Andalusia. Its style, like Craig's, was simple, romantic and refined.²⁴ This house set Smith on an outstanding career in architecture, as he noted, "I soon found that people were not really as eager to buy my paintings which I was laboring over, as they were to have a whitewashed house like mine."²⁵

The house that Smith designed on Plaza Rubio, the Andres House (1926), also serves as a good example of how Smith thought a Spanish Colonial Revival house should look. The facade is plain with very little



Plaza Rubio Cottages, Santa Barbara.

ornamentation except for the arched entrance area. The windows are small and set deep into the wall, giving the appearance of thick adobe walls. The dominant stylistic feature in both the interior and exterior was surface planes, all else being secondary. Above all, it was very important to the designer that the planes be aesthetically pleasing. As Smith noted,

Cezanne and Gauguin gave me the most inspiration, although the Spanish and Italian primitives thrilled me also, so much so that after I got my blood filled with modern ideas of painting, I began to regard all other forms of art with the same consciousness—the consciousness of simplicity.²⁶

While the homes designed by the Craigs, Smith and Winslow were in most cases opulent and for the wealthy elite, they still served as models for the more modest home buyer. These people also wanted the imagery of California that was by then so popularized by these significant architects. Local building contractors emphasized certain aspects of the style important to the imagery of Spanish Colonial Revival and used them in producing homes the average person could purchase. As Carey McWilliams notes,

the so-called Spanish Colonial home that came out of the exposition,

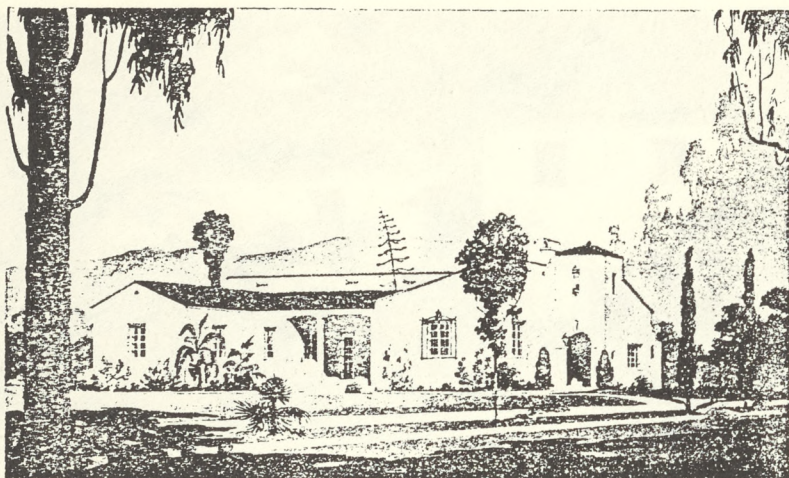


Andres House, 530 Plaza Rubio, Santa Barbara.

with its walls of white stucco and roof of red tile, was a model easily imitated by commercial contractors.²⁷

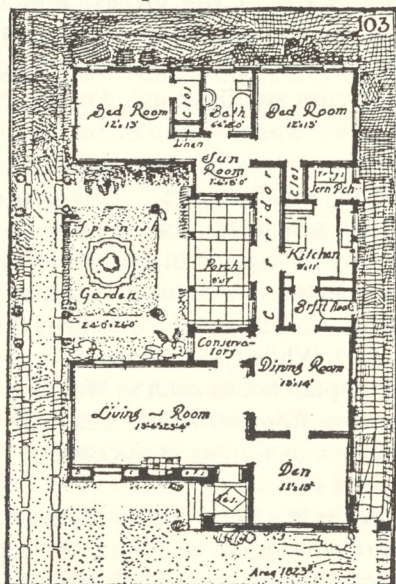
Indeed, some of the artistic elements of Smith's Andalusian style houses, as well as elements from others' work, found their way into the widely reproduced homes being built in the fast developing central Ventura subdivisions. Among those producing homes in Ventura at the time was the firm of Berseid and Barr, "one of the best known and most successful contracting concerns in Ventura County," in the words of Sol Sheridan.²⁸ This contemporary notes further that the firm built a large number of residences and business blocks in the city, "erecting 23 houses in the Oceanview addition, as well as a number of good homes in Hobson Heights."²⁹ Many of their houses were on Anacapa, Catalina and Santa Cruz Streets, ranging in price from \$3,000 to \$5,000. While these contractors drew up their own plans, they were aided by plan books such as Walter S. and Pierpont Davis's *Ideal Homes in Garden Communities*, which shows unique plans for the modest home with examples of successful solutions to providing a patio on a fifty foot lot.

As in Craig's Plaza Rubio cottages, Davis's "ideal homes" served as an aid to designers and builders in planning beautiful rows of homes that would seem as though they belonged together. The appearance of these homes from a distance give the impression of Spanish villages. Perhaps several blocks of San Clemente Street in Ventura best exemplify this planned concept. Rexford Newcomb, another contem-



THIS plan is unique in being both a beautiful and successful solution of a patio plan on a fifty-foot lot. Indeed, it is the most successful solution yet presented. The mistake of placing the court upon the rear is generally made, necessitating extremely narrow width, and the court is a failure. The quite obvious solution is a side location such as has been carried out here.

The design is plain Spanish with somewhat more interesting detail than that found on the California Missions and patios. It will remind the visitor to the "dream city of the old world," the San Diego Exposition, of the architecture, which undoubtedly pleased him there.



Design 103

\$3200—\$3600

A Sample Page from *Ideal Homes in Garden Communities* by Walter S. and Pierpont Davis.

porary of the period, critiqued this vernacular housing as follows:

The charm of the Spanish house lies in its austere simplicity....the greatest danger attending the adaptation of Spanish types to the American small house lies in overdoing the effort and outdoing the prototype. We must beware of running to extremes and becoming too much enamoured of pictorial effects.³⁰

If such concern over pictorial effects was of prime importance and crucial to the authenticity of their style (Spanish Colonial Revival), then these houses as carefully planned and executed neighborhoods might be faulted in comparison to their refined prototypes. The problem, admitting there is one, might lie in the number of builder/designers that are represented on one block. Instead of using only one predominant style, such as "Smith/Andalusian farm house" throughout a section, one finds blocks containing houses representing widely different elements from the Spanish heritage.

Now, as we take a closer look, we will identify the various style elements. Some of these homes were found to have influences deriving from the Smith and Craig compositions. Among these elements are: simple wall surfaces in smooth stucco finished in white; straight barrel mission or American Spanish tile on low pitched cross gabled roofs; recessed casement windows; some kind of simple patio on the front or side that served as a courtyard effect with a wall; some with a limit of one or two arches either in the doorway or window designs. Some of these examples have a heavier Moorish and Gothic influence with painted arches and turrets on top of towers.

Another important style element lingering from the Mission Revival period that was incorporated in the design of some homes was the scalloped curvilinear parapet above the top of the front facade or over a porch entrance. A very simple example in Ventura, located on South Catalina Street is shown on page 29 .

Another major school of style represented in the vernacular house was the Pueblo Revival, which comes from New Mexico and Arizona, areas where original prototypes exist. This style is derived from the mixing of influences from both flat roofed Spanish colonial buildings and native American Indian pueblos. The characteristics of the prototypes are thick adobe-appearing walls, flat roofs, stepped up roof parapets, exposed water canales, blunt angles, irregularly rounded parapets, extended wood-beamed vigas and small windows, usually of casement type.³¹ Lester Walker writes that the



South San Clemente Street, 500 Block, Ventura.

Pueblo Revival style architecture mixed with Spanish Colonial Revival form was very popular with developers in Los Angeles and other Southern California cities in the 1920s. It became a true vernacular style, primarily used for small stucco houses with little embellishment.³²

Many of the houses of Ventura have flat roofs representative of the Pueblo style while others express pueblo elements in exposed vigas and wood lintels over the windows.

Many of the people who moved into these new Ventura subdivisions of the mid and late 1920s were of the construction trades, oil workers and salespeople.³³ Among them we find Fritz Huntsinger, Sr., the Ventura County petroleum production pioneer, who in 1928 lived at 296 Anacapa Street.³⁴ About this time, Mr. Huntsinger was advancing from helper to the position of general foreman at the Schwab Tool Company in Ventura. In 1930, he bought the company, which is now known as Ventura Tool.³⁵ Unfortunately, Huntsinger's house, built by Claude Anderson,³⁶ has been sadly altered with a stone front that hampers the original character of the house.

Mr. Tom H. Higgins and his wife Monica are two longtime residents of central Ventura. Mr. and Mrs. Higgins moved to Ventura in 1927 when Tom was transferred from Santa Monica by the Southern Counties Gas Company. They had one child and found it hard at this boom period to find landlords who would accept a child. What is more, the rents were exorbitant. They were encouraged to buy a house on the east side of town and to avoid the Avenue, termed "Tiger-Town" by a Union Pacific Bank officer.



Spanish Colonial Revival House with Moorish Tower, 562 South San Clemente Street, Ventura.



Mission Revival Style, 351 South Catalina Street, Ventura.

The Higgins family came to the McGlinchey tract on Catalina Street, between San Nicholas and Thompson Boulevard, and discovered the last lot to have a house built on it. The foundation was in and Mrs. Higgins liked the floor plan better, she said, than those of all the other houses because the hall and bedroom could be entered from the back of the house without disturbing the dining room and living room areas.



Pueblo Revival Style, 1995 Channel Drive, Ventura.

During a tour of the house, which was built by Mr. Prichard, the Higginses share their pride and happiness in their home, almost as though they had just moved in. This house retains its original character, as do many on this street. Mr. Higgins says he paid \$7,000 for the house, a sum which he thought was a lot of money fifty-seven years ago. There were lima beans growing in the neighborhood, the streets were unpaved and the street lighting was not in yet. All of the shopping conveniences



Huntsinger Residence, 296 South Anacapa Street, Ventura.

were close by, so they felt pretty comfortable in this new area. In terms of concern over style, not much thought was given to it. The Higgins family was just happy to find a comfortable and affordable house.³⁷



Tom J. Higgins Residence, 178 South Catalina Street, Ventura.

Ventura's stucco houses of the 1920s have an interesting mix of styles and no less interesting are the stories of the people who have lived in them. I hope that in the future they will be given special recognition as important elements in the story of Ventura County. Regardless of where they fit as representative of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, they do deserve recognition as survivors of Ventura's exciting boom years of the 1920s.

NOTES

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⁴Sheridan, Sol N. *History of Ventura County*, Vol. I. (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1926), p. 361.

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⁸*Ibid.*

- ⁹*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*
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- ²¹*Ibid.*
- ²²Gebhard, p. 540.
- ²³Andree.
- ²⁴Andree.
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- ³¹Gebhard. *A Guide to the Architecture*, p. 701.
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- ³³*Directories of Ventura County, 1926, 1928, 1930.* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles City Directory Company.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*
- ³⁵Display, Ventura County Historical Museum.
- ³⁶Building Permits: Ventura, California, 1925-1927.
- ³⁷Interview with Tom and Monica Higgins, December 1984.

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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Cover illustration by Leslie Clark.
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Ramsaur and McCormick photographs courtesy Billie Ramsaur McCormick Maas. Early Clark photographs courtesy William P. Clark. Disney photo courtesy Nick Peirano. Remaining photos from the Ventura County Historical Museum collection.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ned Clark is a seventh grade student at St. Paul's Episcopal School in Ventura. The following essay was written last year as an English project under Mrs. Edgerton.

Ned has lived on the Clark family ranch in Ojai all his life. He hopes to attend Thacher School and Stanford University, but is not yet certain which discipline he wishes to pursue.

He is fond of music, plays the piano, violin, the Irish tin whistle and presently is yearning for a guitar. He collects coins and license plates — the latter collection of some sixty plates includes samples from Germany, England, Chile, Baja California and the prize of the collection, a 1919 white porcelain California plate recovered from an old dump site on the ranch.

Ned enjoys swimming, basketball and, not surprisingly, horseback riding. He and his father have a good start on their summer project which is to explore the Ojai backcountry. They have just returned from a two-day fifty-mile ride which extended from the Thorn Meadow Camp by Gorman through Mutau Flats, over Pine Mountain, through Piedra Blanca and across the upper Sespe.

As for family background, Ned covers the subject quite well himself. In this age of the anti-hero, he has found his own personal coterie of heroes. May they serve him well.

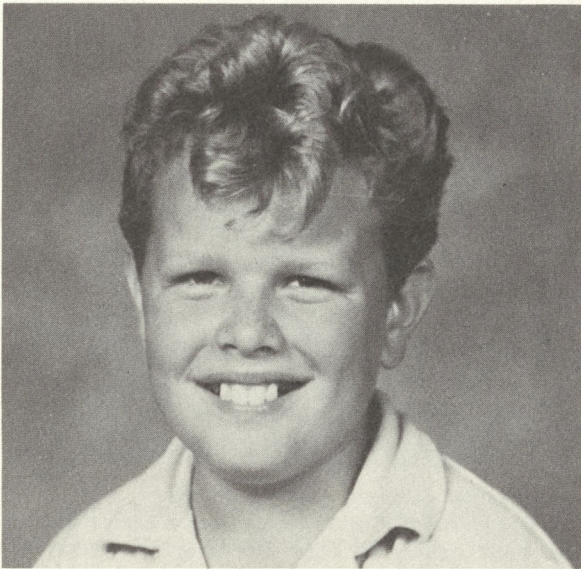
MY ROOTS

by Ned Clark

INTRODUCTION

Nineteen eighty-four was a very "family" year for me. In July I went to the first Clark family reunion in twenty-five years. It was held at Lake Tahoe. My great-uncles and aunts were there telling stories and ninety-seven people were there.

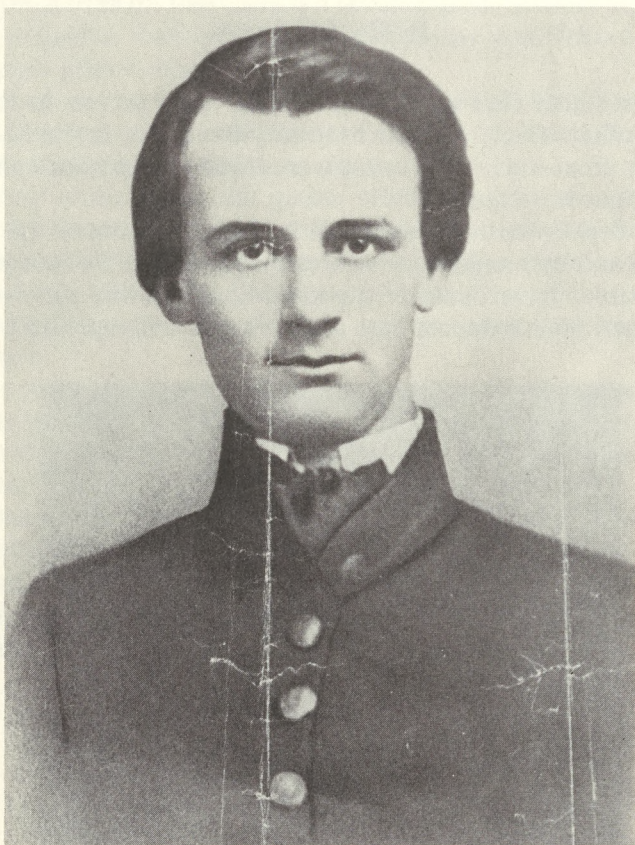
Then in September was the McGrath family reunion; all the relatives, American and Irish, added up to about 340 people! We toured Ireland, but the picnic on the banks of the River Shannon was where we really got together. So it is appropriate that I choose this topic for my report.



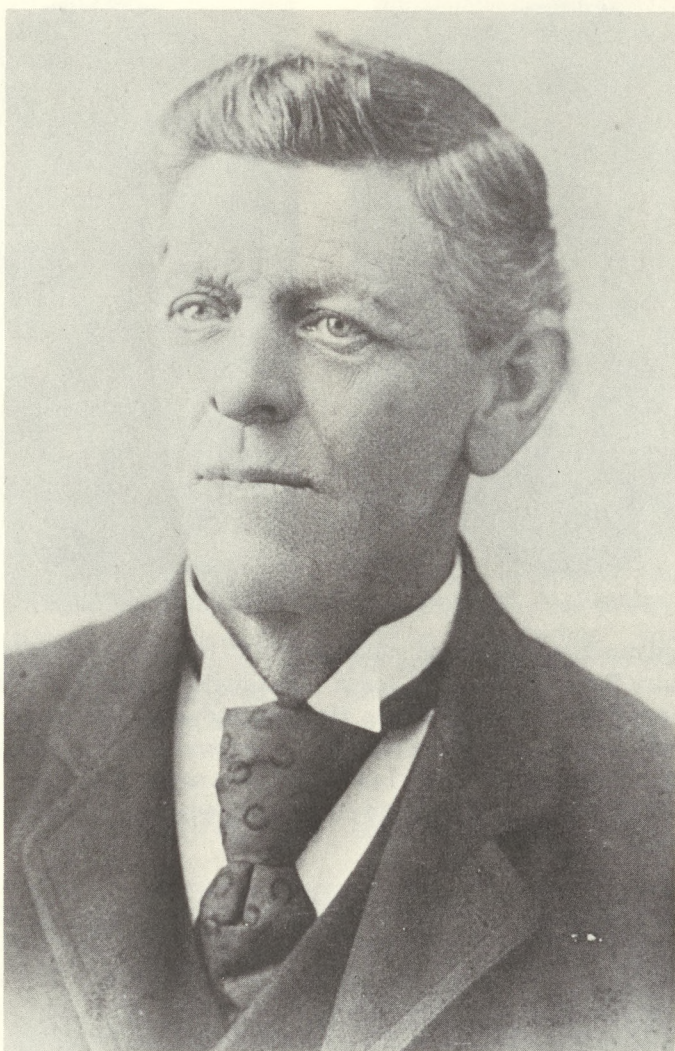
James E. "Ned" Clark III

CHAPTER I RAMSAUR

We can trace the Ramsaur family back a long way. They left France in the late 1500s because they were of the Huguenot religion. They went to Austria for a time and in 1690 Dedrick Ramsour was born. As a young man he went to England and got a land grant in North Carolina from Queen Anne. The Ramsour family lived in North Carolina on a plantation until the Civil War. My ancestor, Stephen Dodson Ramseur, was the youngest Major-General in the Confederate Army.



Major-General Stephen Dodson Ramseur, C.S.A. This "fiery young North Carolinian" died a hero's death in Virginia on October 20, 1864. His body was escorted by "enemy-friends" through the lines so that he could be buried in his native Lincolnton.



William Pinkney Ramsour, Owner of Rancho Tajauta.

After the Civil War, my Great-great-grandfather William Pinkney Ramsour came west and bought Rancho Tajauta, a 4,500 acre land grant in Los Angeles. On this ranch, when one of his foremen died, a man named Mr. Watt, my great-great-grandfather gave his widow and her sons 40 acres on which to live. They sold small parcels to many black people fleeing from the South and this area today is called Watts.



Lucien Claire Ramsaur



Lucia Lee Harris

The big ranch was sold and subdivided and my Great-grandfather Lucien Claire Ramsaur married Lucia Lee Harris, moved north to Santa Paula and raised a family there. He was my other Great-grandfather (Whoopee) Clark's deputy when Whoopee was sheriff. Small world! When my Grandmother Lucia Lee (Billie) was small, she went to school with the "Clark boys" whom she considered wild and from the "wrong side of the river!"



The De La Riva Adobe, Casitas Springs Ranch, on "The Wrong Side of the River," and Home to the "Wild" Clark Boys.



Bob Clark Holding Alice Catherine (Sweetsie) in His Vineyard in the Santa Ana Valley ca. 1912. Billy Clark is on the left; Ned Clark, on the right.



The Ramsaur Women ca. 1916. It was during this time that Billie Ramsaur lived on "The Avenue" (on the right side of the Ventura River) and attended Mill School.

CHAPTER II MC CORMICK

Thomas Hubert McCormick was born on July 9, 1867 in Ballimahan, County Longford, Ireland. His father, James McCormack, died when Tom was three months old and his mother, Katherine, remarried so he was raised by his grandmother. When he was nineteen years old he came to New York and worked on the docks for two years. Then he went to Dublin, California and soon moved to Oxnard, where he found his friends from Ireland, Dominick and Bridget McGrath and their children.

He was farming when he courted and married Elizabeth (Lizzie) McGrath in 1899. Tom and Lizzie moved to Camarillo and built a house. My Uncle Bubby McCormick and his family still live there today.

My Grandfather Jimmy McCormick was Tom and Lizzie's third of their five children. He kept up the tradition of farming, and married Lucia Lee (Billie) Ramsaur. They had three children, one of which is my mom.



*The Thomas McCormick Family. Row 1, l-r: Mary, Tom, Lizzie and Hubert.
Row 2, l-r: Jimmy, Johnny and Joe.*



*The McCormick House (2034 East 5th St., Camarillo)
built by Tom and Lizzie McCormick.*

One of Jimmy's favorite pastimes was hunting and he was good at it. One hot day Jimmy was hunting with a man with a wooden leg named Hap Maxwell. It was hard for Hap to walk while hunting so they were on the back of a pick-up truck. Hap shot a deer, but only wounded it. Jimmy didn't want the animal to suffer so he ran after it down a steep, rocky, brushy ravine. When he found it, he killed it and then, not wanting the meat to go to waste, he climbed all the way back up the ravine with the deer on his shoulders!



Billie Ramsaur McCormick, 1930.



Bambi and Jimmy McCormick, 1946.

CHAPTER III MC GRATH

from Yvonne Bodle's "The McGrath Story:
100 Years of Ranching on the Oxnard Plain"

Dominick McGrath was born in Derry Shanogue, Longford County, Ireland on June 6, 1827 to Mary and Peter McGrath. Historical references list Dominick's birthdate as 1832 or 1835; but the tombstone at the Santa Clara Catholic Cemetery in Oxnard, where he is buried next to Bridget, reads June 6, 1827. As one cousin put it, "The tombstone has to be right, else they would have sent it back!" Dominick was next to the youngest in a family of six children: Andrew, Peter,

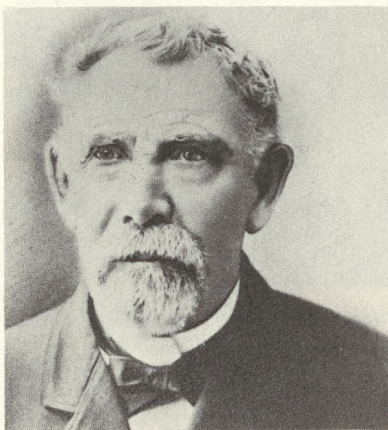
John, Mary, Dominick and Ellen. The children were reared on a 200-acre farm belonging to Peter and Mary. The homestead is still being farmed by one of Dominick's grandnephews, Peter McGrath. Dominick received his education in the country schools of his native isle.

Around the age of 18 he left for America with his brother, Peter. The two of them worked in the foundries in New York and Brooklyn for six years before yielding to the urge to go West. Embarking from New York, it is thought that Peter got off somewhere in South America; family stories have it that being extremely prone to seasickness, he could not face sailing around the Horn

Dominick settled in Alameda County about the year 1851 or 1852 . . . and married Bridget Donlon on August 25, 1867 in Dublin, Alameda County After several trips to southern California on horseback to look over the area and purchase land in the Santa Clara Valley, Dominick returned to Livermore and settled his affairs. Then with Bridget and their four little girls, he boarded a ship and sailed south, disembarking around Santa Barbara and making the rest of the journey by wagon



Bridget Donlon McGrath



Dominick McGrath

Those who knew Dominick said that he had a zest for life that extended from such little things as a good meal to major things like his religion, his land and most of all, his children. The strong sense of family he felt and fostered has continued to characterize the McGraths. Bridget and Dominick (Mama and Papa as they were fondly referred to) had 14 children with only 10 reaching adulthood, six daughters and four sons: Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth, Sarah Ellen (Nellie), Josephine, James Hubert (Hugo), Joseph, Thomas Francis (Frank), Robert and Ann.



McGrath Brothers and Sisters. Seated, l-r: Margaret McGrath, Ellen Leonard, Ann Laubacher and Elizabeth McCormick; standing, l-r: Hugo, Mary Hanly, Joe, Josephine Doud, Frank and Robert.

CHAPTER IV BOUNDS

The Boundses are the family we don't know much about. Oba Bounds, my great-great-grandfather, was an Indian agent to Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians. We think France is the country he was from originally. His son, Obie, was born and raised on the reservation. Obie married Ethel Bertha Hammonds, a schoolteacher, from Kansas.

We know that the family had moved to California by 1912 because Fern Myrtle Bounds, their middle daughter and my grandmother, was born in Fort Jones, California, on March 7, 1912. The family came to Ventura about 1925 and Obie's youngest sister, Lillian, married a young artist named Walt Disney. She was almost thrown out of the family because nobody thought Walt would amount to anything!



Obie Bounds and Ethel Hammonds



Fern Bounds, ca. 1930.

During the depression, Obie, who was a carpenter and cabinet maker, was working on a ship when it exploded. He was badly burned and his son-in-law, Nick Peirano, who was in Ventura at his grocery store at the time, called Walt Disney because nobody had any money and it was going to be very expensive to pull Obie through. Walt sent a blank check to take care of his brother-in-law.



Walt and Lillian Bounds Disney

CHAPTER V CLARK

The Clark family came from County Monaghan in Ireland. Michael Hugh Clark, his brother, Tom, and his parents came to the United States in 1855 and settled in Lafayette County, Wisconsin. Tom came to Ventura County in 1867 or 1868; Michael Hugh followed him in 1879.

Michael Hugh's son, my Great-grandfather Robert Emmett (Whoopee), married Alice Leslie Barnett and lived in Ojai with her. Whoopee was a stagecoach driver, then a forest ranger, a Ventura County Sheriff and, finally, a Federal Marshal. My Great-uncle Bill and his son carry on the tradition of law. Uncle Bill was Chief of Police of Oxnard and his son, Bill (Butch) was a California State Supreme Court Judge, Assistant Secretary of State, National Security Advisor and Secretary of the Interior. Now he is an emissary on special assignment for the President.

Robert Emmett Clark was called "Whoopee" by the whole family, and he got this nickname because his oldest grandson Bill Clark got so excited when he went to see Robert Emmett that he yelled, "Whoopee! Whoopee!"



Ventura County Sheriff Bob Clark



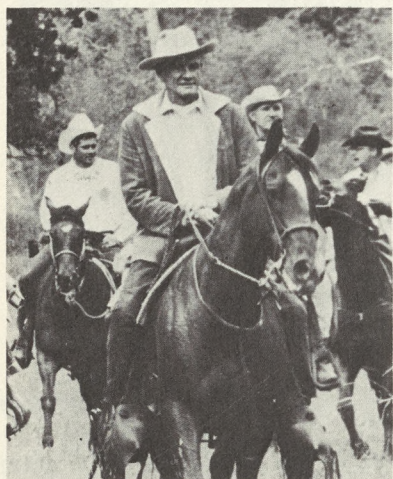
*Alice B. Clark With Son Bobbie,
Main Street of Nordhoff (Ojai),
1906.*

Alice Leslie and Robert Emmett had ten children. Their son, James Edward (Ned), my grandfather, was in the oil business (like my dad). Ned was born in Ojai on June 25, 1909. He went to Ojai elementary schools, Ventura Union High School, Santa Clara University and graduated from Stanford University in 1932 with a degree in petroleum engineering. He started working with Shell Oil Company while he was

in school, as part of the "Weed Gang." In 1933 he landed a job as junior engineer for Shell. He also met a lady and on April 29, 1934, he married Fern Myrtle Bounds. Their marriage was fruitful and they had four kids: Patricia Ann, Linda Fern, James Edward II, and Leslie Lee.



From l-r: Best Man Bill Clark, Matron of Honor Ruby Bounds Peirano, Groom Ned Clark, Bride Fern Bounds, April 29, 1934.



Ranchero James E. "Ned" Clark



Mary Claire McCormick, James E. Clark II and Sam, June 7, 1969.

In 1947 Shell put Ned in China for a year-long project. He had many interesting experiences, especially in the Gobi Desert. The Tibetans there, who had never seen a man his color or size, called him "Dagor" or "White Giant." His job took him all around the United States too and by 1962 he was in New York as executive vice-president in charge of production.

Ned retired in 1967 to get back to his Ojai ranch where he worked cattle. He was enjoying this life when he found out he had a brain tumor. He lived another year until the tumor took its toll on December 28, 1970.

CONCLUSION

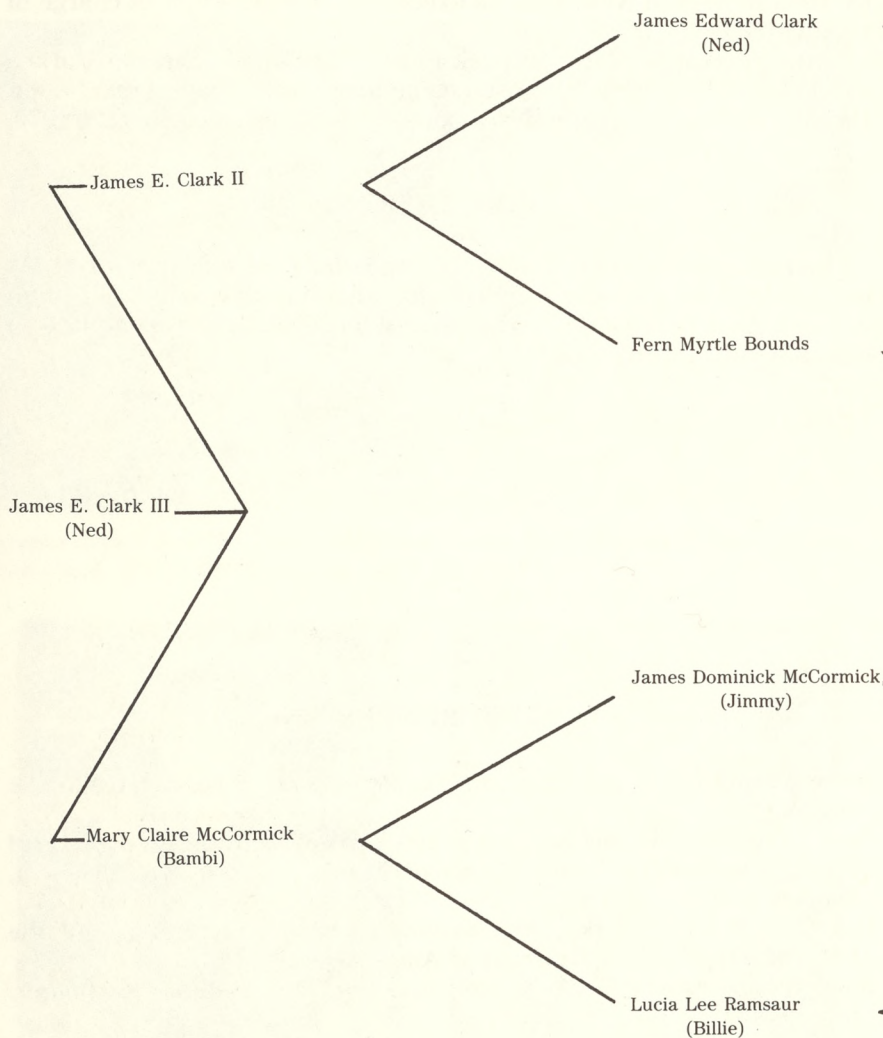
I had a lot of fun doing this project and doing the research for it. My mom helped me giving me information and xeroxing pictures. I think it was a good time to do it while the older generation was around to help me with information.

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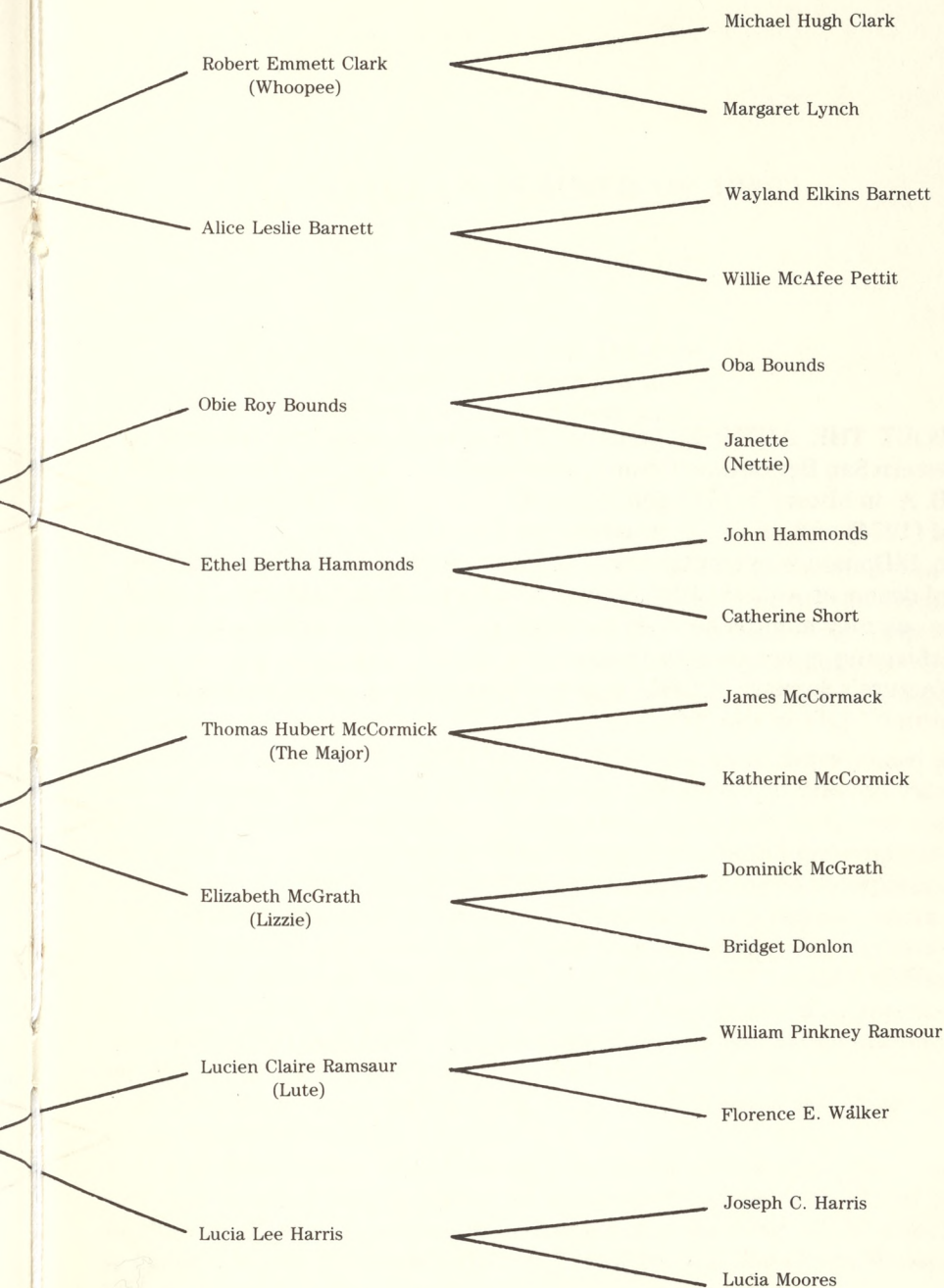
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I went to the Ventura Historical Museum, talked to Nick Peirano and called my Great-aunt Katie. My mom called my grandmother, my Great-uncle Johnny McCormick, my cousin Vince Doud and my cousin Arlene Peirano.

THE FAMILY TREE
of
NED CLARK



Editor's note: The variant spellings of McCormick and Ramsaur
have been correctly recorded by the author.



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Mr. DiDonato is currently employed as a teacher of American history and drama at Aquinas High School, San Bernardino, California. During the summer months he does historical research and writes while also performing in community theater.

"Ventura's Summer of 1986" is part of a larger work, as yet unpublished, entitled "Life in the '90s."

VENTURA'S SUMMER OF 1896

by Louis A. DiDonato

Far away from toil and care
Revelling in fresh sea air,
Here we live and reign alone
In a world that's all our own.

(Gilbert & Sullivan, *The Pirates of Penzance*)

As far back as human memory can reach, Ventura has been a pleasant place to spend the summer; the cooling breeze from off the ocean has always made temperatures comfortable. The Chumash Indians knew this centuries before the coming of the Europeans. Accordingly, it was along the seashore that the majority of the Ventureño Chumash chose to make their home.

On Easter Sunday, March 31, 1782, Father Junipero Serra raised a wooden cross as part of the founding ceremony of Mission San Buenaventura. Construction on the building itself, however, was not begun for approximately one decade. Slowly a settlement grew up outside the mission walls and by 1866 this settlement chose to incorporate itself, under the laws of the state of California, as San Buenaventura. American fondness for utility over beauty soon demanded that this lovely name be shortened to "Ventura," and "Ventura" it remains today.

In the summer of 1896, the population of Ventura stood at approximately 2,500. Town center was no longer Mission San Buenaventura, but rather Plaza Park, bordered by Santa Clara Street on the north, Meta (now Thompson) Street on the south, Fir Street on the east and Chestnut Street on the west.

As with every other small farming community in California, Ventura had one building which served as a meeting hall as well as for a multiplicity of other functions. In Redlands it was the Academy of Music; in Ontario it was Workmen's Hall; in Pomona it was the Opera House; and in Ventura it was Armory Hall.



Laying of the Cornerstone of Armory Hall by Captain Elwell and the Men of Company D, April 29, 1890.

Armory Hall was a two-story brick building on Main Street just down the street from the mission. Built in 1890 as the headquarters of Company D, Seventh Regiment of the California National Guard, Armory Hall was used for dances and other events sponsored by such groups as the Sons of the Veterans of the Civil War, the volunteer firemen, and the Native Sons and Daughters of California.¹ Most of the events during the summer of 1896 would take place in or around Armory Hall.

The people of Ventura had a taste for the theatrical during the summer of 1896. July 3, the "Home Talent Minstrel Show" opened to a full house at the Armory, "admission 50 cents, no extra for reserved seats."² The *Free Press* felt the tempo could have been faster paced but also felt that the local talent "should not be expected to carry their parts as smoothly as professionals."³ The paper did have some advice to offer, however:

The "jokes" at the expense of people in the Hall might have been left out, though those who were not the victims applauded vigorously. People will not attend such shows if they are to be made the subjects of ridicule.⁴

On the night of Friday, July 10, the Ideal Opera Company introduced Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* to the people of Ventura. The company had played the Los Angeles Theater just a few weeks before; their performance of the same operetta received rave reviews



Ventura's Company H, 7th Regiment, California National Guard, off to the Spanish-American War via San Francisco Presidio. Armory Hall is on left; Anacapa Hotel, on right.

from the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Times* reviewer being particularly taken with the performance of Lillian Burdett as Mabel:

Her presence is extremely graceful and attractive and she captivated the audience with her singing. She was given a warm welcome upon her appearance and was obliged to repeat her tuneful aria "Poor Wandering One."⁵

The *Times* even found favor with the chorus of local talent:

The chorus of forty voices was exceedingly good and might well stand comparison with many of the professionals. With two or three exceptions the girls are pretty.⁶

The *Free Press* proclaimed the operetta "the biggest thing done so far" in Ventura and later added:

The Ideal Opera Company rendered the comic opera the "Pirates of Penzance," in a very pleasing manner to a large and appreciative audience.⁷

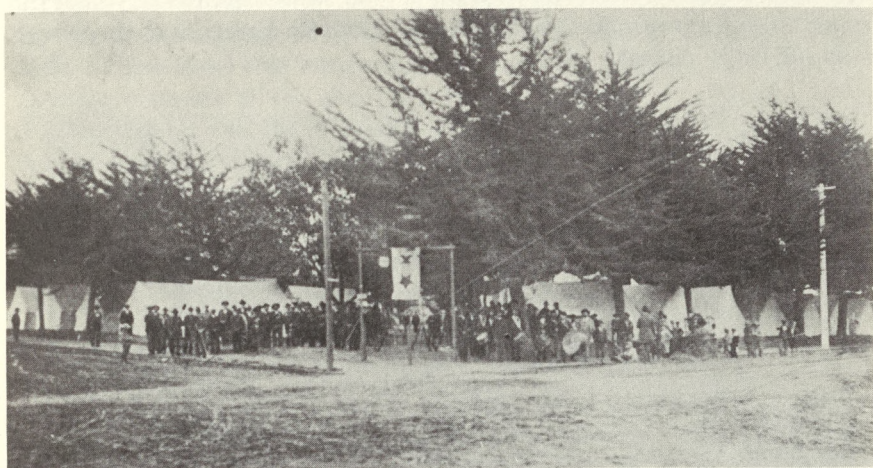
The opinion of the *Ventura Free Press* notwithstanding, the "biggest thing done so far" in Ventura (at least in the summer of '96) preceded *The Pirates of Penzance* by some two weeks. That event was the ninth annual encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in Ventura's Plaza Park. The vanguard of the Southern California Veterans of the Civil War began to arrive in late June. Colonel John Brookes, chairman of the tent committee, brought with him 200 tents.⁸ David Weldt of San Pedro brought with him his yacht, Lizzie Bell, and a plan to take the vets on excursions up the coast during the encampment. By July 1, veterans and their families were converging on Ventura's Plaza Park, temporarily rechristened "Camp Phil Sheridan," from all over Southern California. George T. Downing of Pasadena was elected camp commander; Andrew J. Bell of Ventura, senior vice commander; J. A. Scobery of San Diego, junior vice commander; A. C. Drake of Pasadena, adjutant captain; James B. Summons of El Monte, quartermaster; and the Reverend William K. Knighten of Los Angeles (formerly of Ventura), chaplain.⁹

The purpose of the encampment was to give the vets a chance to see old friends and to exchange war stories — stories which no doubt grew in the retelling. It also gave wives and children a taste of military life. Military discipline was conducted somewhat tongue-in-cheek, however; for example, on July 8, Women's Auxiliary and Children's Day, men were not allowed inside the lines of the camp unless they could offer the countersign, the countersign being "mystery, martial law, and misery for all malefactors."

Mayor Hartwell of Pasadena was found with an empty whiskey bottle; at his "court martial," he managed to escape. "No doubt," reported the *Free Press*, "the penalty would have been severe, as carrying an empty bottle is a very serious offense."¹⁰ The incident must have caused Hartwell a great deal of embarrassment back in Pasadena, for that city was strong on prohibition and had laws which outlawed the sale of liquor within the city limits.¹¹

By flag raising time, Wednesday, July 1, tents had been set up and the camp decorated with flags, Chinese lamps and electric lights. At the center of camp was a large tent which was used to host dances and other assemblies and it was here on opening night that Adjutant Drake read the camp orders and the Ventura City Band played for the first dance. By this time, 2,000 men, women and children had gathered either in camp or in the local hotels.

The G.A.R. tried to make the camp as military as possible, given the circumstances: a cannon was fired at sunrise; reveille was blown at 9:00



Grand Army of the Republic Encampment at Plaza Park

a.m.; taps were sounded in the evening; public telephones were removed. None of it was taken too seriously; families ventured out and spent time down at the beach. And the "roaring lion of San Jacinto," an individual by the name of Dusenberry, at midnight stood outside his tent and screamed in this encampment as he had done at others before, with only token censure.

On Saturday, July 4, the veterans joined civic groups in an Independence Day parade. Featured were the city bands of Ventura, Ojai, and Santa Barbara; marching units from Companies H and E, California National Guard; marching units from the G.A.R.; floats and decorated carriages; fire companies; and a mounted unit of native Californios. "Never in the history of Ventura," wrote the *Los Angeles Times*, "has equal enthusiasm been shown or has such a crowd gathered."¹²

Sunday's events took a more solemn tone; those that had passed away since the last encampment were remembered. During the course of the memorial service, roll call of the departed was read and flowers placed on the empty seats reserved for them under the big tent. Later in the evening the solemnity was leavened by a concert held in the park.

On Monday, the veterans and their families either spent the day at Port Hueneme or went up the coast to Santa Barbara. The townspeople of Hueneme arranged a reception and entertainment at the A.O.U.W. (Ancient Order of United Workmen) Hall. Friday afternoon, after the officers held a business meeting, the flag was lowered as the "Star

"Spangled Banner" was sung by the Pomona Ladies Quartette — and the ninth annual encampment of Southern California Veterans of the G.A.R. was officially closed.



Armory Hall

With the close of Camp Phil Sheridan, Ventura became caught up, as was all America, in the campaign for President. The Republican party, meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, had nominated William McKinley as their candidate and adopted a protectionist and "sound money" platform. The Democrats, meeting in Chicago, were swept off their feet by William Jennings Bryan; their platform stood for free trade and the coinage of silver, positions also held by the Populist party. Bryan, receiving the nominations of both the Democrats and the Populists, became, at age thirty-six, the youngest man ever nominated by a major political party.

The ballyhoo of the Republican convention was not lost in Ventura. As in other southern California towns, Ventura Republicans met to "ratify" their support for the party's candidate. The Ventura McKinley Club was organized with 200 names on the rolls; at Nordhoff a similar organization was started with 50 members enrolled.¹³ Ventura Republicans, meeting on the night of Saturday, July 31, were told by Mr. Weber of Ohio:

The same old Democratic jackass has been regalanized and is once more stalking the country appealing for votes. The only change in the poor beast is the addition of one more tail which does not wag in harmony with its fellow.¹⁴

Nor were Ventura Democrats immune from the political fever of 1896; however, the coinage of silver and other national issues had little to do with it. The issue that concerned all southland Democrats was the all-pervasive power of the Southern Pacific Railroad in California. Collis P. Huntington was the virtual political boss of the state. The railroad had its friends and cronies everywhere — governors, legislators, judges — all in debt to the Southern Pacific. As Kevin Starr so accurately described the situation, “The S.P. grew from the third party of California politics to the only party, holding Democrats and Republicans alike in receivership.”¹⁵

In 1893 the Southern Pacific had established what was called the Political Bureau, headquartered in San Francisco. Through the efforts of the bureau chief, William F. Herrin, the railroad’s interests were protected.¹⁶ The object of the railroad’s interest in 1896 was the Sixth Congressional District which included Ventura, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. The man chosen by the railroad who would be least objectionable for the Democratic nomination was Leonard J. Rose, Sr., owner of Sunny Slope of San Gabriel Valley. Rose, through the offices of his son, Ventura resident Leonard J. Rose, Jr., had invested heavily in Main Street properties as early as 1887; he was co-owner of the Ventura Livestock and Slaughtering Company; he owned the Rose Flour Mill and the Rose Hotel.¹⁷ He was, moreover, much respected by all factions within the Democratic party.

The man the Southern Pacific did not want to see become the Democratic nominee was George S. Patton, Rose’s neighbor, ironically, in the San Gabriel Valley. Patton was a member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and had allied himself with the Free Harbor League which was battling to have federal money spent building a harbor at San Pedro rather than at Santa Monica where the Southern Pacific had invested heavily.¹⁸ George Smith Patton, son of a Confederate colonel and father of the future World War II general, was already a veteran of the political wars; the V.M.I. graduate-turned-lawyer had been elected district attorney of Los Angeles County in 1888 but failed in a bid to be elected to Congress in 1894.

The district convention, a continuation of the state convention held in Sacramento, opened at Armory Hall on August 4. From the outset both sides conceded it would be a very tight contest for the nomination. The Rose people made their headquarters at the Rose Hotel on Main Street; the Patton forces were just down the street at the Anacapa Hotel.



The Rose Hotel, Northwest Corner of Main and Chestnut Streets.

Caesar Latiallade, a veteran of Democratic party politics and delegate from Santa Barbara, told the *Los Angeles Times*:

I think George Patton will carry off the nomination. In fact I know he will receive it although by a very small majority as the voting between the Patton delegates and those who have pledged their support to L. J. Rose will be remarkably close . . . How the Los Angeles [County] delegates stand in regard to Rose and Patton I am not in a position to know positively, but as regards the other counties of the district I know it to be a certainty that Patton will draw a sufficient majority to cover safely discrepancies in his stand among the local delegates.

Of the seventy-three delegates that are pledged to support Patton, twenty are outside of Los Angeles County and; therefore, he needs the votes of but seventeen of the delegates of the thirty-seven . . . who will represent this county to get the nomination; and I am assured by parties who are in a position to know that he will receive at least that number.¹⁹

Managing the Patton campaign was his brother, Harry W. Patton, and Thomas O. Toland of Ventura. The Rose efforts were being managed by John W. Mitchell, Tom Cuddy, and Tom McCaffery, McCaffery being the chief dispatcher for the Southern Pacific in Los Angeles.²⁰

The first test of wills came very early as the convention chose its chairman. The Rose forces nominated M. K. Merritt of Monterey; it was reported Merritt carried six proxy votes for Monterey delegates who were not in Ventura. "Monterey County," wrote the *Times*, "will be represented by one man, a railroad agent, who carries the county in his pocket in the shape of proxies." The Patton delegation nominated Brice Grimes of Ventura as chairman. The result was, the Rose people won the first round with the election of Merritt as chair.²¹

The next order of business was the appointment of a credentials committee, the credentials in question being those proxies held by United States Senator Stephen White. White was on top of the Southern Pacific's political hit list; he had provided strong opposition to the railroad's plans to develop Santa Monica — and White held several proxies that were known to be committed to Patton. The argument made by the railroad men was that White was holding proxies from delegates outside his own county. The majority of the credentials committee, who were mostly railroad men, wanted the proxies rejected. This set off loud protests from the Patton forces; George Patton accused Huntington's cronies of trying to manipulate the convention. After order was restored, the convention voted against the recommendations of the credentials committee and allowed the proxies to stand.

The names of Patton and Rose were then placed in nomination; when the vote was taken the result was a tie; a second ballot — then a third — still a tie. Patton's people had counted on the votes of Mr. Fagan of Ventura and J. E. Youkem of Los Angeles. Fagan had changed his mind and cast his vote for Rose. Youkem was at the convention as a proxy for another Los Angeles man, F. M. Nickell; however, he refused to vote for either candidate and left Ventura. It was later reported Youkem was pressured by the Southern Pacific to vote for Rose or the railroad would become involved in litigation in which Youkem was engaged and under the railroad's influence he could lose the judgment. At one point in the balloting, the chair had declared Rose the winner; this brought cries of foul from Toland who challenged the results. Chairman Merritt apologized when he discovered he *had* made an error in counting the votes.

The convention resumed that evening with more votes being taken and each one resulting in a tie vote. Before the seventh ballot was taken Harry Patton handed the chair a telegram from George Hartman, an ab-

Anacapa Hotel. VENTURA, Cal.



The Anacapa Hotel, Northwest Corner of Main and Palm Streets.

sent delegate from Santa Cruz. Hartman informed the convention he was giving his proxy to Patton. The Rose forces objected and demanded the credentials committee investigate the authenticity of the Hartman telegram.

The Pattonites also claimed to hold the proxy of a Los Angeles delegate named George Arbuckle; this claim became the subject of heated debate as well, for it was thought Arbuckle's vote was safely in the hands of the Rose camp. J. Marion Brooks accused the Patton forces of buying Arbuckle's vote with rum.²³ The *Los Angeles Express* added that Arbuckle was being sequestered "in a Ventura hotel where champagne was flowing as freely as water."²⁴ By adjournment time, 11:30 p.m., the credentials committee had not been successful in reaching Hartman; Arbuckle, for whatever reason, remained a Pattonite; and the railroad men, working to secure the proxy of F. M. Nickell, were using every device to stall for time.

When the convention reconvened at Armory Hall the next morning, J. Marion Brooks asked that the credentials committee be given until 1:00 p.m. to contact the elusive Mr. Hartman. This brought objections from the Pattonites who had just received a telegram from State Senator Bart Burke and Charles Cassin confirming the legitimacy of the telegram.²⁵ This did not impress the chair, however, and the convention was recessed until 1:00 p.m.

With some delegates still outside the hall, Chairman Merritt called the afternoon session to order, immediately recognizing Gus Cooper of Santa Barbara. Cooper made a motion the convention adjourn and reconvene in Los Angeles on August 17; the railroad men tried to get the motion through on a quick vote; Patton demanded a debate; Adolph Ramish of Los Angeles, the convention's secretary, noted the question had already been called and was, not too surprisingly, supported in his point of order by the railroad men.

At this point, the convention erupted into a shouting match between the two factions. Patton rose to speak, although attempts were made by Brooks and McCaffery to cut him off. Patton voiced his respect for Leonard Rose; however, he was indignant over the way the "Huntington hirelings" had tried to control the proceedings. "Is it your desire to nominate a Democratic candidate," he asked the delegates, "or do you intend to bow down to Huntington and do his bidding and nominate a dummy to be knocked down?" This brought his supporters to their feet and a five minute ovation followed. Brooks then took the floor, spoke of harmony and moderation, as did others, until the convention was adjourned — to be reconvened in Los Angeles on August 17.

The Patton forces caucused later in the day at the Anacapa Hotel, drafting a resolution stating that they would continue the struggle. Then, although their business was far from finished, the Democrats left Ventura. The *Free Press* thus commented on the convention:

The Democracy and citizens of Ventura County were furnished a practical illustration of what Southern Pacific railroad can do in the field of practical politics, when exigency demands its best or worst, call it which you will.²⁷

The story does not end with this summer in Ventura. When the Democrats reassembled in Los Angeles, the bitter struggle continued and the man pushed along by events was Leonard J. Rose. After the 123rd ballot, Rose offered to withdraw his name from nomination if Patton would do the same to clear the way for a compromise candidate. Through



Main Street, Ventura, 1896. Note streetcar tracks in center of photo; Ventura County Bank on left; Mission San Buenaventura, distant right; Anacapa Hotel, right mid-block.

the efforts of Senator White, a compromise candidate was found — the convention nominated Harry Patton.²⁸

The whole exercise would later prove to be futile. The Democrats would merge with the Populists and nominate Populist Charles A. Barlow of San Luis Obispo, a man with strong ties to Southern Pacific, to run for Congress in the Sixth District. (While the convention was still meeting in Los Angeles, McCaffery had attempted to get Barlow the nomination. While serving in the State Assembly, Barlow had tried to have White's election to the United States Senate investigated.)²⁹ And in November of 1896 Charles A. Barlow, running against James McLachlin, an anti-railroad Republican, would be elected to represent the Sixth Congressional District in the "one-party" state of California.³⁰

NOTES

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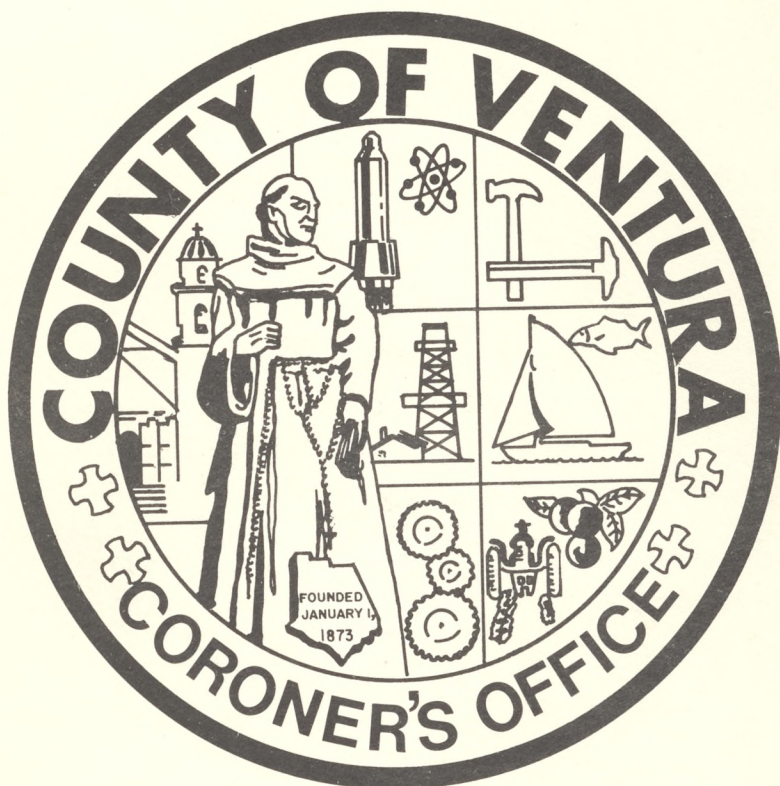
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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Cover illustration by
Dwight Holmbom.

PREFACE

The history of the Office of Ventura County Coroner and those officials who held that office has been nearly forgotten. As a member of the Medical Examiner-Coroner's staff, I wanted to know everything that was available on this important and historic county office.

Much of the history of Ventura County has been scattered far and wide. The Ventura County Historical Museum Library is the one place where items have been cataloged and filed and where I returned many times for reference. In addition, I wish to express my gratitude for facts and photographs contributed by the *Ventura County Star-Free Press* Library, Helen Mayr, Joseph P. Reardon and all the funeral directors, past and present, of the county of Ventura.

Robert D. Boyd,
Coroner Investigator,
County of Ventura

THE HISTORY OF THE OFFICE OF THE VENTURA COUNTY CORONER

by Robert D. Boyd

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE OFFICE

The formation of the office of Coroner for the county of Ventura coincides with the formation of the county itself: January 1, 1873. Approved March 22, 1872, by Governor Newton Booth, the "Ventura Act," as it was known, spells out the boundaries, officials, their salaries, and methods of tax collection for the new county. Those sections of the act which apply to this work are as follows:

Section 5. There shall be an election held in the County of Ventura within sixty days from the time of the first meeting of the Commissioners. There shall be chosen at said election, by the qualified electors of said county, one District Attorney; one County Clerk, who shall be ex officio Auditor, Recorder, and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, and ex officio Clerk of the County, Probate, and District Courts; one County Superintendent of Public Schools; one Sheriff, who shall be ex officio County Tax Collector; one County Assessor; one County Treasurer; one County Surveyor; one County Coroner, who shall be ex officio Public Administrator. Such County officers shall hold their respective offices until the first Monday in March, A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy-four and until their successors are elected and qualified.

Section 11. The county officers of Ventura County shall, except as otherwise provided by this Act, be elected at the same time as county officers in other counties of this State, and shall hold their offices for the term fixed by law. They shall give bonds for the faithful discharge of their duties, to be approved by the County Judge, in the following sums: Sheriff, in the sum of six thousand dollars; as ex officio County Tax Collector, in the sum of fourteen thousand dollars; the County Clerk and ex officio Recorder and Auditor, in the sum of five thousand dollars; the Assessor, in the sum of five thousand dollars; the County Treasurer, in the sum of twenty thousand dollars; the County Surveyor, in the sum of two thousand dollars; the Coroner and ex officio Public Administrator in the sum of five thousand dollars. The Supervisors of Ventura County shall provide for the election of their successors, whose term of office shall be three years.

Section 12. All officers provided for by this Act shall perform duties as required by the general laws of the State, unless otherwise provided by this Act.

Section 14. The officers of Ventura County shall receive the following salaries and fees: the Treasurer shall receive per annum the sum of six hundred dollars; the Assessor shall receive per annum the sum of six hundred dollars; the District Attorney the sum of five hundred dollars; the Superintendent of Public Schools the sum of three hundred dollars. The fees of all other officers shall be the same as provided for in an Act to regulate fees of office, approved March fifth, A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy, for similar officers in the County of Santa Barbara.

February 25, 1873, was the date of the election required to be held "within sixty days of the first meeting of the Commissioners." The first Coroner of the new county, nominated on both tickets and thereby elected unanimously, was Dr. Cephas L. Bard.

Dr. Bard and the other early elected Coroners of Ventura County were paid under the guidelines of Assembly Bill 245 which was signed into law on March 5, 1870. It reads as follows:

County Coroners in the several counties of this State shall receive for their services compensation as follows:

For general services in holding an inquest, ten dollars.

For each witness subpoenaed, twenty-five cents.

For each mile necessarily travelled, in going to the place of inquest, twenty-five cents.

For directing or attending the interment of each body upon which an inquest has been held, two dollars; which fees shall be all that he shall be entitled to charge.

In the County of Sacramento, for each mile necessarily travelled in holding an inquest, twenty-five cents.

For swearing each witness or juror, twenty-five cents.

For writing down testimony, twenty-five cents per folio.

Additional state-level legislation affecting the office of Coroner had been approved February 8, 1872:

Chapter LXXXI: An Act concerning the attendance of physicians and surgeons in certain cases, and to provide payment for making chemical and post-mortem examinations. The People of the State of California, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The Coroner or other officer holding an inquest upon the body of a deceased person may summon a physician or surgeon to inspect the body, or a chemist to make an analysis of the contents of the stomach, or the tissues of the body of the deceased, and give a professional opinion as to the cause of the death.

Section 2. Any physician, surgeon, or chemist professionally attending as a witness on an inquest, or upon a trial of any person charged with murder or manslaughter or in cases *delunatico inquirendo*, as above provided, shall be allowed a reasonable compensation for such attendance or examination by the Board of Supervisors, upon the written certificate of the Court or other officer requiring such services, as to the extent and supposed value of the same, provided that such certificate shall not be conclusive as to the amount of compensation.

The first Coroners of Ventura County were, for the most part, physicians. It later evolved that Undertakers and Funeral Directors held the office. In 1885, the Coroner was also appointed Public Administrator by order of the Board of Supervisors.

Ordinance Number 9

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Ventura does Ordain as follows:

That the duties of Public Administrator of Ventura County and Coroner of said County are hereby consolidated. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the first Monday in January A.D. 1885.

Passed and adopted this 7th day of July 1884.

The method of payment remained the same as in 1870 but the added duties of Public Administrator provided additional income through fees collected in handling estates and indigent burials. Ordinance Number 9 remained in effect until the late 1960s when most counties in California, including Ventura, chose to fund the Coroners Office from the general fund. Virgil Payton, Coroner from 1954 to 1960, was the first salaried Coroner-Public Administrator. Mr. Payton was also the first Coroner to have an office provided by the county. Pat Sullivan, in 1955, became the first full-time paid Deputy Coroner.

In the 1960s, also, local groups and citizens continued to discuss an issue raised in the 1950s: that of separating the office of Coroner from that of Public Administrator. The legislation most affecting the office of Coroner, however, was signed into law September 2, 1969. It is Chapter 1398, Section 1 of the California Code which allows counties to abolish the Office of Coroner and create the Office of Medical Examiner.

Chapter 1398, Section 1.

Section 24010 is added to the Government Code, to read:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Board of Supervisors may by ordinance abolish the office of coroner and provide instead for the office of medical examiner, to be appointed by the said Board and to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the coroner. The medical examiner shall be a licensed physician and surgeon duly qualified as a specialist in pathology.

April 24, 1973, Ventura County passed the following ordinance (Number 2688) "separating and re consolidating various county offices," including that of Coroner-Public Administrator:

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Ventura, State of California, does ordain as follows:

Section 1. By previous ordinances, the Ventura County offices of Coroner and Public Administrator have been consolidated and the Coroner-Public Administrator has been appointed ex officio Public Guardian.

Section 2. The previously consolidated offices of Coroner-Public Administrator and ex officio Public Guardian are hereby separated.

Section 3. Henceforth, the duties of the office of Public Administrator are consolidated with the duties of the Treasurer-Tax Collector and the Public Administrator is hereby appointed ex officio Public Guardian

The Board of Supervisors then appointed Robert G. Branch, Ventura County Treasurer, to the post of Public Administrator-ex officio Public Guardian vacated by Coroner Paul R. Mayes.

By February 23, 1973, Ventura County was ready to "abolish the office of Coroner and create the office of Medical Examiner." The differences in these offices are perhaps best outlined in the two following quotations:

THE CORONER

The coroner is a public official whose principal duty in modern times is to inquire, with the help of a jury, into any death that appears to be unnatural.

The office originated in England and was first referred to as *custos placitorum* or "keeper of the pleas" in the Articles of Eyre of 1194, although there is some evidence that it may have existed earlier. The name was originally known as "crowner" or "coronator," derived from *corona*, meaning crown. The coroner, elected by freeholders of the county, was originally charged with the duty of safeguarding the King's property and served as a check on the powerful office of the sheriff in the royal interest.

During the 19th century, legislation did away with all the vestiges of the coroner's early powers, many of which were already obsolete. The Coroners Amendment Act of 1926 limited his duties to conducting an inquest into all the deaths occurring within his district by violent or unnatural means or from some unknown cause, or into the death of a person in prison or under circumstances that require an inquest in accord with other legislation. The act also set up the qualifications for office, requiring that a coroner be a barrister, solicitor, or legally qualified medical practitioner. In practice, persons possessing both legal and medical qualifications have been appointed.

In Canada, all coroners are appointed by a provincial order in council, signed by the lieutenant governor. As a judge of a court of record, he is not liable in civil action for anything done by him in his judicial capacity if he acts indiscreetly or erroneously.

In the United States, the office is usually elective, but in some states it may be appointive. About half of the states have a coroner's system; in some of the others the sheriff or the justice of the peace performs his functions, while in still others the coroners office has been replaced by a medical examiner. In a few states the coroner's staff is composed of persons skilled in pathology, toxicology, and chemistry.

In some states coroners must be pathologists, while in others a layman may be authorized as coroner, with the power to employ a physician to conduct the autopsy. In most states the coroner has the power to issue a warrant for the arrest of persons who may have caused the death of another by criminal means and possesses all the powers of a magistrate to hear testimony. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th edition, 1985)

THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

The medical examiner is a government official whose duty is to determine the cause and manner of death in cases where the cause has not been certified by a physician or when the circumstances surrounding a death are suspicious.

In the United States these functions are performed either by coroners or by medical examiners. Unlike coroners, who are elective officials and need not have medical training, medical examiners must be professionals with experience in medical pathology.

The medical examiner system was pioneered by Massachusetts in 1877, and New York City established an office of Medical Examiner in 1918. By 1980 most states had replaced the office of coroner with a medical examiner system, either statewide or in some counties. (*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1984 edition)

Upon the vacancy of the office of Coroner-Public Administrator created by the resignation of Paul Mayes, February 23, 1973, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors placed into effect Ordinance Number 2743.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Ventura, State of California, does ordain as follows:

Section 1. On February 23, 1973, Paul R. Mayes, prior to the expiration of his elected term, resigned the combined county offices of Coroner-Public Administrator-ex officio Public Guardian.

Section 2. On April 24, 1973, the Board of Supervisors by Ordinance No. 2688, separated the combined offices of Coroner-Public Administrator-ex officio Public Guardian and recombined the Public Administrator and ex officio Public Guardian with the offices of Treasurer-Tax Collector. The office of Coroner was not thereby combined with another office.

Section 3. Henceforth, pursuant to Government Code section 24010, and effective January 1, 1974, the office of Coroner is abolished and established instead is the office of Medical Examiner.

Section 4. For organizational purposes, the office of Medical Examiner is hereby placed as a separate division within the Health Services Agency.

Section 5. The Board shall appoint the person to serve as Chief Medical Examiner, establish his salary and provide such personnel, equipment and services as are required to discharge the duties to be performed by the office of Medical Examiner.

The Medical Examiner-Coroner system was then put into action in Ventura County, with Dr. Ronald N. Kornblum appointed first Medical Examiner. This action came just two days short of the 100th anniversary of the Office of Coroner of Ventura County.

THE CORONERS OF VENTURA COUNTY AND THEIR TERMS OF OFFICE

CORONER

Dr. Cephas L. Bard	February 25, 1873 to (Elected)	May 15, 1875 (Resigned)
Dr. Francis F. Delmont	May 15, 1875 to (Appointed)	September 5, 1877
John B. Wagner	September 5, 1877 to (Elected)	September 3, 1879
Dr. Reuben W. Hill	September 3, 1879 to (Elected)	November 7, 1882
Dr. Francis F. Delmont	November 7, 1882 to (Elected)	May 8, 1883 (Resigned)
Kenneth P. Grant	May 8, 1883 to (Appointed)	November 4, 1884

CORONER-PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

Henry D. Ley	November 4, 1884 to (Elected)	November 2, 1886
Summerfield D. Sheppard	November 2, 1886 to (Elected)	November 6, 1888
Dr. Mark F. Patten	November 6, 1888 to (Elected)	March 12, 1891 (Deceased)
Charles N. Baker	March 12, 1891 to (Appointed)	May 7, 1897 (Resigned)
Edward F. Reilly	May 7, 1897 to (Appointed)	November 4, 1902
Leroy S. Beckley	November 4, 1902 to (Elected)	November 8, 1910
Wallace R. Gibson	November 8, 1910 to (Elected)	November 3, 1914
Lewis P. Hathaway	November 3, 1914 to (Elected)	November 4, 1922
Oliver L. Reardon	November 4, 1922 to (Elected)	May 5, 1937 (Deceased)
Joseph P. Reardon	May 6, 1937 to (Appointed)	November 8, 1938
Ted Mayr	November 8, 1938 to (Elected)	June 8, 1954
Virgil L. Payton	June 8, 1954 to (Elected)	November 30, 1960 (Resigned)

Pat W. Sullivan

December 1, 1960 to
(Appointed)

June 7, 1966

Paul Mayes

June 7, 1966 to
(Elected)

February 23, 1973
(Resigned)

MEDICAL EXAMINER

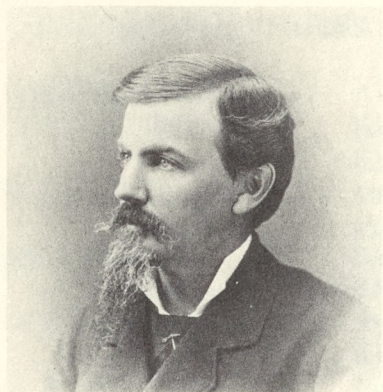
Dr. Ronald N. Kornblum

January 1974 to
(Appointed)

August 1980
(Resigned)

Dr. F. Warren Lovell

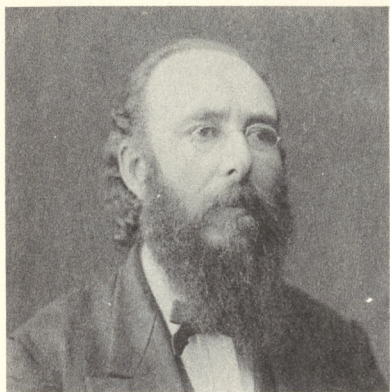
March 1981
(Appointed)



DR. CEPHAS L. BARD

February 25, 1873 to May 15, 1875

Dr. Cephas L. Bard, the first American-born physician in Ventura County, was born in Pennsylvania in 1843. Dr. Bard was a member of a pioneer Ventura County family and was involved in the formation of the new county. His popularity allowed him to run for the office of Coroner on both the Democratic and Republican tickets. Elected the county's first Coroner February 25, 1873, Dr. Bard resigned the office on May 15, 1875 in order to return to Pennsylvania for about one year and further his studies in surgery and physics at the Medical Institute in Philadelphia. On his return to Ventura, he went into private practice. Dr. Bard died April 20, 1902, in the Elizabeth Bard Memorial Hospital. The hospital, completed shortly before his death, was his dream brought to fruition by brother, Thomas R. Bard. It was named in honor of their mother, Elizabeth.



DR. FRANCIS F. DELMONT

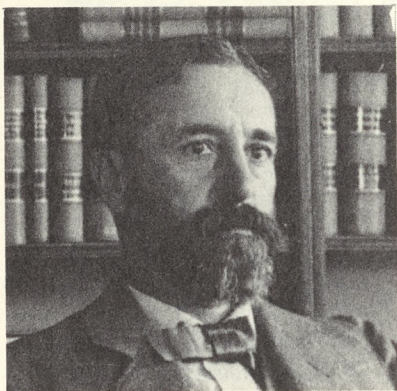
May 15, 1875 to September 5, 1877

November 7, 1882 to May 8, 1883

Dr. Delmont was a local physician and owner of Delmont's Drugstore on Main Street in Ventura. He first served as Coroner when appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Dr. Cephas L. Bard. Dr. Delmont has the distinction of serving as Coroner during the investigation of two of the county's most notorious murder cases: the first, that of T. Wallace More, who, according to Dr. Delmont's report printed in the *Ventura Free Press*, suffered ten gunshot wounds; three months later Dr. Delmont held an inquest into the death of Ydelfonso Urtasun, a Basque sheepherder killed by Jeff Howard.

During the end of his first term, and shortly after the More murder, Dr. Delmont was under attack by the editor of the *Ventura Signal*. A reward of \$50 gold was offered for a look at Dr. Delmont's medical diploma and \$10 in gold for the name of the French College where he earned it. The *Signal* further underlined its charges by calling Delmont "charlatan" and "quack." Were Dr. Delmont's credentials fraudulent? Or was he an innocent victim of one of Ventura County's more famous newspaper battles? Whatever the case, the minutes of his post mortem examination of the body of T. W. More (see appendix) not only were accurate medical reporting, but, according Dr. Warren Lovell, Ventura's present Medical Examiner, "would do quite well in today's courts."

In October of 1882, Delmont won the Democratic nomination for office of Coroner and ran against Republican Robert W. Forth, defeating Forth by fifty-seven votes. May 5, 1883, Dr. Delmont resigned as Coroner and sold his Ventura drugstore. He and his wife left the country to return to France.



JOHN B. WAGNER

September 5, 1877 to September 3, 1879

John B. Wagner was owner of the Pioneer Drugstore in Ventura. He ran for and was elected Coroner on September 5, 1877. A former Deputy County Clerk, Wagner served one term as Coroner.

DR. REUBEN WEBB HILL

September 3, 1879 to November 7, 1882

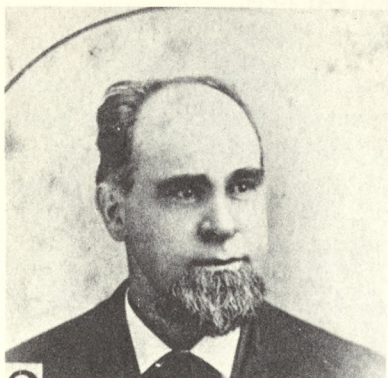
Dr. Reuben W. Hill was a Ventura physician with an office on Oak Street. He ran for and was elected Coroner on September 3, 1879, serving one term. Dr. Hill later owned the Rincon Ranch in Santa Barbara.



KENNETH P. GRANT

May 8, 1883 to November 4, 1884

Kenneth P. Grant was an Ojai resident and owner of Grant's Blacksmith Shop in Ventura. He was long active in county politics, serving one term as County Supervisor. Grant was appointed Coroner by the Board of Supervisors on May 8, 1883 to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Dr. Delmont. Grant Park, in the city of San Buenaventura, is named for this man.



HENRY D. LEY

November 4, 1884 to November 2, 1886

Henry D. Ley was owner of H. D. Ley Furniture Store in Ventura. He ran for and was elected Coroner on November 4, 1884. As the result of legislation on the state level and an ordinance passed by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Ley, on January 1, 1885, became the first to hold the combined office of Ventura County Coroner-Public Administrator.

Mr. Ley ran for County Treasurer against Mr. Ayers on November 2, 1886 and lost the election. He died October 11, 1907.



SUMMERFIELD DEAN SHEPPARD

November 2, 1886 to November 6, 1888

"Summer" D. Sheppard, the son of Judge S. A. Sheppard, was a Ventura druggist and later a dentist. He ran for the office of Coroner-Public Administrator on the Democratic ticket and was elected on November 2, 1886 at the age of twenty-six. He served one term in office. Mr. Sheppard died in Ventura in 1915.

DR. MARK FANCHER PATTEN

November 6, 1888 to March 12, 1891

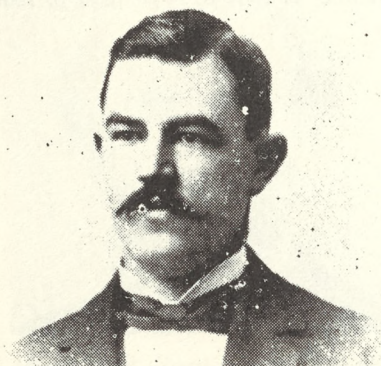
Dr. Patten was a popular Santa Paula physician and member of the Ventura County Medical Society. Twenty-five years of age when he ran for the office of Coroner-Public Administrator, Patten was elected November 6, 1888. Dr. Patten died in office on March 12, 1891, at the age of twenty-eight. He had contracted tuberculosis. The notice of death was written by Dr. Cephas L. Bard.



CHARLES N. BAKER

March 12, 1891 to May 7, 1897

Charles N. Baker was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fill the vacancy created by the death of Dr. Mark Patten. Mr. Baker, a Fillmore resident, had served as deputy under Sheriff A. J. Snodgrass, Deputy Assessor and Santa Paula School District trustee. In earlier years he had worked as a stage coach driver and had run a local hotel. He resigned as Coroner on May 7, 1897.



EDWARD F. REILLY

May 7, 1897 to November 4, 1902

Edward F. Reilly, a Ventura resident, was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fill the office vacated by the resignation of Charles Baker on May 7, 1897. He served one term only. Mr. Reilly died in an automobile accident in Santa Barbara on August 6, 1925.



LEROY S. BECKLEY

November 4, 1902 to November 8, 1910

Leroy S. Beckley was born in Illinois on March 22, 1858. He came to California in 1889. Mr. Beckley first settled in Santa Paula and went into business as an undertaker, owning his own funeral parlor. He later moved to Ventura and opened a funeral parlor on Santa Clara Street.

Mr. Beckley was elected Coroner-Public Administrator on November 4, 1902. During his two terms of office he was often called to the site of the Santa Susana railroad tunnel works. He investigated over seven deaths of workers killed by cave-in, gas, or electrocution. In addition, four men were killed and many more injured on October 9, 1903 when a work train failed to stop and slammed into cars at the end of the line. Another railroad accident claimed four lives on January 24, 1909 when a landslide on the Rincon buried three cars and a locomotive. On February 26, 1909 another man was killed at this site when a train, failing to stop, hit rescue workers still at the scene of the earlier disaster.

WALLACE ROBINSON GIBSON

November 8, 1910 to November 3, 1914



Wallace R. Gibson, an undertaker, owned a funeral parlor at 613 Main Street in Ventura. He was thirty years of age when he ran for and was elected Coroner-Public Administrator on November 8, 1910.



LEWIS P. HATHAWAY

November 3, 1914 to November 4, 1922

Lewis Hathaway, a Ventura resident, led a colorful life in both public and private enterprise. He was the Postmaster of Ventura and also editor of the *Ventura Free Press*. Disassociating himself from the paper to run for the office of Coroner-Public Administrator, Hathaway was elected to the office on November 3, 1914. He served two terms in office. Mr. Hathaway died August 18, 1925.



OLIVER L. REARDON

November 4, 1922 to May 4, 1937

Oliver Reardon came to Ventura from Chicago in April of 1911. He established his own funeral home in the city of Ventura, ran for and was elected Coroner-Public Administrator on November 4, 1922.

Mr. Reardon was Coroner during the St. Francis Dam disaster which occurred March 12, 1928. The collapse of the dam and resulting flood claimed over 400 lives. Mr. Reardon recovered 226 bodies, the last being found August 16, 1928.

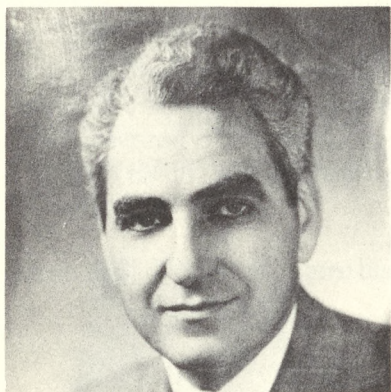
Oliver Reardon served Ventura County as Coroner for over fifteen years, until his death in office May 4, 1937.



JOSEPH P. REARDON

May 6, 1937 to November 8, 1938

Joseph Reardon was appointed Coroner-Public Administrator by the Board of Supervisors on May 6, 1937 to fill the term of his late father, Oliver.



TED MAYR

November 8, 1938 to June 8, 1954

Ted Mayr, born in Whittier, California, came to Ventura in 1926. He paid his way through embalming college by working in the Ventura Avenue oil fields. After serving his apprenticeship with the J. E. Barker Funeral Home, Mr. Mayr opened his first funeral home in Ventura in 1934. November 8, 1938, he ran for office and was elected Coroner-Public Administrator.

As Coroner, Ted Mayr investigated the crash of a Western Airlines plane on White Mountain in November of 1946 in which eleven people lost their lives. Another airline disaster occurred July 12, 1949: a Trans-National Airline plane crashed in the Santa Susana hills—twenty-six were killed. Two weeks after the Trans-National crash, a small plane came down in the Ventura hills claiming the lives of four local men.

Ted Mayr served four full terms (sixteen years), holding the office of Coroner-Public Administrator longer than anyone else in the history of the county.



VIRGIL L. PAYTON

June 8, 1954 to November 30, 1960

Virgil Payton was first an embalmer with the Diffenderfer Mortuary in Oxnard, then Deputy Coroner under Ted Mayr. He ran for and was elected to the office of Coroner-Public Administrator June 8, 1954.

Mr. Payton was Coroner when members of a cult calling themselves "WKFL" took up residence in Box Canyon. December 10, 1958, two of the cult members carried twenty sticks of dynamite into the headquarters building and exploded the charge. The explosion killed the cult leader, Krishna Venta, and nine other persons, including the bombers. This killing made nationwide headlines and the FBI was called in to assist in the investigation.

Mr. Payton resigned in the middle of his second term, November 30, 1960, to open his own funeral home in Oxnard.



PAT W. SULLIVAN

December 1, 1960 to June 7, 1966

Pat Sullivan joined the Coroner's office as the first full-time paid Deputy Coroner in July of 1955. He served five years as deputy until the resignation of Virgil Payton at which time he was appointed Coroner-Public Administrator by the Board of Supervisors.

Pat Sullivan, born in Austin, Texas, December 4, 1894, came to Ventura County in 1934. He was on the police force at Port Hueneme Seabee Base and served as a special deputy for twenty years. At one time he owned and operated Pat's Cafe on Thompson Boulevard in Ventura. Mr. Sullivan served nearly two full terms as Coroner. He died in Ojai in 1971.



PAUL MAYES

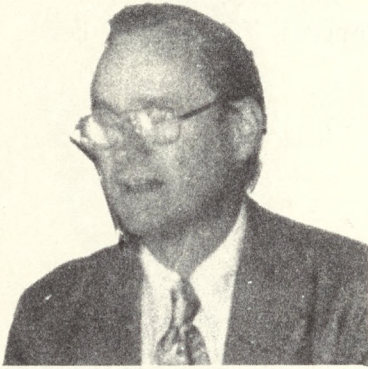
June 7, 1966 to February 23, 1973

Paul Mayes was Deputy Coroner under Pat Sullivan. He ran for office and was elected Coroner-Public Administrator June 7, 1966. Serving nearly two full terms, Mr. Mayes resigned from office February 23, 1973.

This was the end of an era, for upon the vacancy created by his resignation, the Board of Supervisors abolished the office of Coroner-Public Administrator (Ordinance #2688) and created the office of Medical Examiner.

RONALD N. KORNBLUM, M.D.

January 1974 to August 1980



Appointed by the Board of Supervisors in January of 1974, Dr. Ronald Kornblum was the first Chief Medical Examiner of Ventura County. He came to Ventura County from the state of Maryland where he was the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner of that state system. He is recognized as a specialist in the field of Forensic Pathology.

Dr. Kornblum resigned from the office of Medical Examiner in August of 1980 to join the staff of the Medical Examiner of Los Angeles County.

F. WARREN LOVELL, M.D.

March 1981



Dr. F. Warren Lovell was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to the office of Chief Medical Examiner in March of 1981. He came to Ventura County from Seattle, Washington. Receiving his B.S. from the University of Oregon in 1949, his M.D. from Northwestern University of Chicago in 1953, Dr. Lovell has worked at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, with NASA and with the F.A.A. where he established himself as an air crash specialist.

EPILOGUE

Ventura County's first Coroner, Dr. Cephas Bard, served approximately 3,500 county residents on a part-time basis. Today, Dr. Lovell's staff, in addition to Dr. Lovell, consists of five investigators and one Assistant Medical Examiner-Pathologist serving over 600,000 county residents. The budget for 1985-86 is just under \$550,000.

In the state of California there are fifty-eight counties. Of these there are presently eighteen elected Coroners, thirty-six elected Sheriff-Coroners, and four appointed Medical Examiner-Coroners. The concept of Medical Examiner has not been widely accepted in California.

Of the four counties having Medical Examiner-Coroner offices—San Francisco, Santa Clara, Los Angeles, and Ventura—Ventura County is the smallest in population and county budget. It is also the only Medical Examiner-Coroner office under the control of the Health Care Agency. As the county grows and the need for more services and expanded case-loads dictates, there will be a need for change.

It is foreseeable that Ventura County's Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office of the future will be housed in a new and modern building, mid-county, and will be placed under some type of budgetary control by the Board of Supervisors. This will assure its independence from the parent Health Care Agency.

APPENDIX

Minutes of a post mortem examination of the body of T. W. More, made ten hours after death, by Dr. F. Delmont:

Rigor mortis is strongly developed. The following wounds were discovered on the body: [1] Gunshot wound in forehead, the ball piercing the center of frontal bone, and passing directly through the brain, lodging on the left and upper part of occipital bone, fracturing it; forehead blackened with powder. [2] Gunshot wound on right side of head, the ball piercing the right parietal bone, lodging within the skull and fracturing it. [3] Gunshot wound in right temple, the ball passing in a direction towards the base of the skull. [4] Gunshot wound in the corner of right eye, fracturing external angular process of frontal bone, passing through the orbit of the right eye, fracturing right nasal bone, and lodging under upper maxillary bone. Left eye ecchymosis. [5] Gunshot wound in right maxillary bone, the ball entering the head. [6] Gunshot in the right side of the neck, the ball passing back and lodging in the vertebrae. [7] Gunshot wound in left side of neck, the ball penetrating. [8] Gunshot wound in left breast the ball being stopped by the collar bone. [9] Gunshot wound in right arm at head of humerus, the ball entering the body. [10] Gunshot wound in upper third of right thigh, the ball ranging upwards and penetrating the abdominal cavity. An autopsy of the body was declined by the relatives.

(Ventura Free Press, Saturday, March 31, 1877)

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QUARTERLY



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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Cover illustration by Leslie Clark from a photograph by Helen Caire. Pictured is a vaquero aboard the schooner *Santa Cruz* bound for Santa Cruz Island.

Map of Santa Cruz Island by Joan Word.

Photographs from the collections of Helen Caire and Carey Stanton.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: The parents of Helen Caire, although both born in San Francisco, established their home in Oakland after their marriage. Helen was born and raised in Oakland, attending Holy Name College (present site of the Kaiser Center) for grammar and high school. After attending University of California at Berkeley, Helen further expanded her education with extensive travel: Europe; Canada; Mexico; Guatemala; the South Seas, Tahiti and other Society Islands, Marquesas and Tuamotu—but it was at Santa Cruz Island that Miss Caire spent “every summer since before I can remember—happy days!” Miss Caire’s first contribution to *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, “A Brief History of Santa Cruz Island from 1869 to 1937,” appeared in the Summer of 1982. Miss Caire’s other publications include:

“Christmas at Santa Cruz Island,” *Noticias*, Winter, 1983;

“The Last Vaqueros,” *The Californians*, Volume 4, Number 5;
and *Señor Castillo, Cock of the Island*.

ISLAND ROUNDUPS AND SHEARING

by Helen Caire

PART ONE: ROUNDUPS

Santa Cruz Island lies about twenty-five miles due south of Santa Barbara. It is one of the links in the chain of four islands which, where the California coast takes an east-west swing, form the Santa Barbara Channel. Justinian Caire, in his development of the Island ranch, added vineyards and cattle to the formerly-introduced sheep as the main ranching operations. Consequently, the busiest seasons were the vintage and the cattle and sheep roundups. With regard to the latter, my father, Frederic Caire, noted:

a goodly number of men—riders and shearers—were brought from the mainland for a period of forty to fifty days. In early days as many as 40 to 50,000 sheep roamed the island; later the number was regulated to accord with the natural conditions determined by rainfall and feed reserves.

In early days there were two shearing seasons—spring and fall, but with the reduction in the number of sheep only one in spring was necessary. Because of the nature of the terrain, the roundups and trasquila (as the shearing was referred to at the Island) remained much the same for over half a century. Other ways were tried but were never successful. These attempts, which will be mentioned later in this account, provided a good laugh for the oldtimers. Most of what follows was written at the Island during the last roundup.

The vaqueros in the Santa Barbara region, called Barbareños, are recruited on the mainland for ranch work on Santa Cruz as well as on the three other islands on which there are sheep operations: San Miguel, San Clemente, and San Nicolas. Of course, they are also recruited for cattle operations on Santa Cruz Island and on the mainland. After roundup, some continue work on the ranches breaking horses, riding fence, checking water holes for cattle, etc. But most of the vaqueros find other jobs during slack season.

From Santa Barbara, crossing the channel in the Santa Cruz Island Company schooner *Santa Cruz*, the vaqueros arrive at Prisoners' Harbor, the main port of the Island. Up the three-mile canyon bed road of the Cañada del Puerto by truck (in olden days by horse-drawn wagons), they alight at the Main Ranch in the Cañada del Medio, the central valley.

After stowing their gear in one of the bunkhouses, they cross the vast barnyard



Lineup of Vaqueros Before Roundup, Main Ranch and Barnyard. To the left is the shearing shed.

to the red brick stable where horses, saddles, and bridles are assigned. Spurs, *reatas*, *chirrión* (braided rawhide quirt), and knife are each man's personal concern. Now the chorus of crickets and frogs take over; then the night is still.

Very early the next morning, the bell on the knoll behind the kitchen rings mercilessly—before the birds have begun their chorus of matins in the pepper trees, even before the white dawn. Often it is in pitch darkness that the vaqueros start their day. After breakfast in the long mess hall they set out, catching their horses and saddling up. More than likely there are several mad dashes across the barnyard, the younger horses skittish at this early hour. Amid laughter from those on quieter mounts and cries of “*Bueno! Stay with him!*” a short wild west show breaks out.

The bucking is soon checked; in the semi-obscurity the vaqueros trot up to form a circle around the *mayordomo* who gives them their posts for the roundup. He points east, west, north or south in his explanations. Few instructions are needed as the vaqueros are old hands and usually take the same posts every year.

Each roundup, called *corrida* in Islandese, covers some section of the territory being run, such as the Pinos Chicos (a hard one) and Pinos Grandes (a long, rough one) both on the northwestern coast; Potrero Norte (rolling hills, easy country); Punta del Oeste (to the westernmost point, a very long trek that starts from Christy Ranch); Coches Prietos (on the southern coast) as well as many others.

Now hoofbeats sound on the still air as the riders start out. Beyond the barnyard they separate to take the roads east or westward; after a distance they follow the

trails in the northern or southern ranges between which the Cañada del Medio is cradled. Here and there a man begins to drop off to reach his appointed place.

Lead man has one of the hardest jobs, as his is the farthest outpost of the territory being covered. The roundup begins when he starts. The vaqueros in the near vicinity, hearing his shout, close in gradually. The canyons and hills echo and resound with whoops, cries, and cracks of *chirriónes*. "Hoop-ah! Hoop-ah!" The *mayordomo* is here and there to see that all goes well, urging, commanding.

The horses, too, know the game. Sturdy-legged, broad-chested, with the hoofs of goats, energy and stamina from mustang blood—these are the horses that work on the annual roundups at the Island. Without the horses' "savvy" in such rugged country, the roundups would be impossible. They follow the sheep, watching their movements, and gallop in to cut off their breaking. The tough, accustomed hoofs can follow the sheep almost everywhere. At certain strategic points a *punta manga* (wing fence) helps the vaqueros and horses to head the sheep in the right direction especially toward the last stretch of the run. Sometimes, of course, a few sheep will break and get by a horse and rider. Then there must be swift backtracking to round them up again.

Hour upon hour the pursuit and driving continue—up one *cañada* and down another, across one ridge to a farther one. More and more sheep join the band, the semicircle of vaqueros behind them always increasing and closing in. The ranges, usually lying in a great spell of silence, echo and re-echo with the voices of men, the thud of horses' hoofs, cracks of *chirriónes*, the bleating of rushing sheep—the sun has long ago risen and climbed high in the sky, but the work goes on. The



Lineup of Vaqueros Before Roundup, Christy Ranch.

The riders keep following till all the bands of sheep are united, the semicircle of horsemen close behind.

The sheep are driven toward a *punta manga* which leads into fields not far from the Main Ranch, or from Christy where the roundups and shearing also take place. The rest stop may be in the hanging valley of Portezuela where the sheep are herded into the Descanso field. There hang the silver skeletons of fiddlenecks, their gold long-since spent. Men, horses and sheep rest for an hour or so before the final drive into the Main Ranch, or Christy and the corrals near the shearing shed there.

During this pause in the *corrida*, if you want to hear an oldtimer chuckle, ask him if he ever saw a buck running around the Island hills with white sails on his horns. You'll hear this story: One year the Santa Cruz Island Company, though skeptical as to results, allowed a different mode of rounding up the sheep. A number of skilled and experienced sheepherders and their dogs were included with the vaqueros at the start of the *corridas*. The herders were excellent sheepmen on their smooth or gently rolling land with flocks accustomed to their methods, but at the Island . . .

Alas for Little Bo-Peep! The dogs returned to the Main Ranch footsore, paws pricked with cactus spines. Improvised little leather shoes failed to help them. Worse yet, the sheep failed to shy clear of the four-foot-high white cloth strips nailed to the fence on both sides of the home stretch. (This novel spectacle was intended to encourage the animals to continue in the right direction.) Thus arose the hilarious legends of rams roaming the Island hills with white streamers waving. It was enough to make the oldtimers laugh until they rolled off their saddles. Thereafter, the usual ways of sheep roundups were reinstated. On the rugged Island terrain this method proved the best.

But now it is time to return to our mutttons, deserted at their resting place. If it is near enough to the Main Ranch, Hercules Pico, cook, has driven out to leave provisions: bread, onions, *frijoles*, coffee. Having unsaddled, the vaqueros prepare for a meal. A few men set about building a circular fireplace with large creek rocks. Some gather firewood. Others whittle points on slim branches or reach up for the barbecue sticks of the previous year, stuck across boughs of great oaks shading the barbecue area. A few vaqueros are roping a lamb or two for the feast. The lazy ones are lying on their backs or pretending to be busy about a saddle or a sore finger. But there is no bickering. In the main, the work is taken on good-naturedly by the energetic men.

The lambs are quickly dispatched, drawn and skinned with the hunting knife, which is stuck in the belt and used for many things. Without it the vaquero would



Carne Asada Barbecue, Sur-Cañada Pomona.

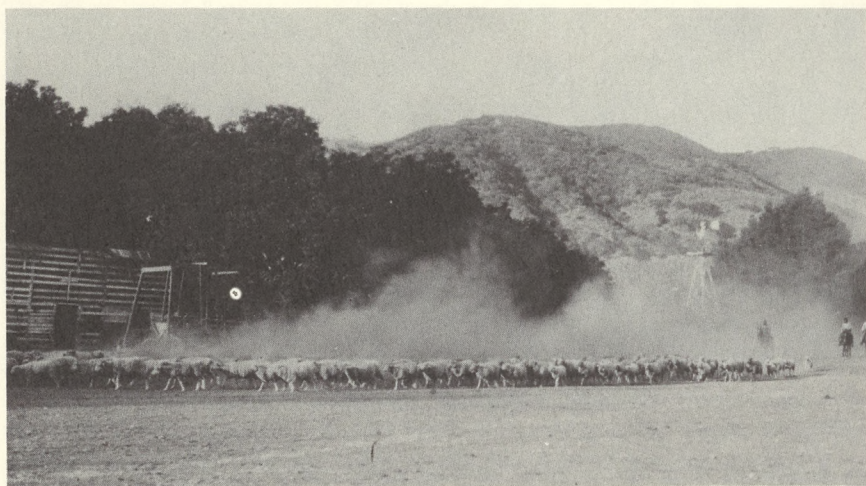
be almost lost. How else could he slice his bread or cut a leather thong from the saddle if necessary, or clean his nails?

The meat is cut up and spitted on the barbecue poles. If a young wild pig happens to be caught not far from the resting place, he becomes part of the menu. Soon arises the peculiarly savory odor of *carne asada* cooked outdoors, an irresistible scent to a hungry group that has worked hard, so usually the meat is eaten underdone. The fat sizzles down on the hot coals which sputter and flame up.

After the meat is cooked, a vaquero with a delicate palate places a lamb's head whole into the glowing coals. When he considers his prize well-done, he lifts it out with sticks, cleaves it open, and shares the well-roasted brains with other gourmets. Thick slices of Pico's good bread are toasted, spread with the finest fat—which any vaquero will tell you is as good as butter—then topped with hearty onion rings.

Talk is rather general, broken by laughter at the remarks or antics of a comedian or two. Mingled with the aroma of cooking meat are the scents of boiling coffee and of hand-rolled cigarettes. After the barbecue, there is time for a *siesta* on the generous leafy mattresses cushioning the earth, with a saddle for a pillow.

Then the vaqueros are back in the saddle again for the few miles of the home stretch. As they near the Main Ranch, a vanguard of two or three rides ahead to open gates, close others, and take various posts so that the sheep will be headed toward the corrals near the shearing shed at the western end of the barnyard. (In olden times a few tame goats were kept, usually at Prisoners' Harbor; there never were wild goats on the Island. They were trained so that during roundups one would lead the sheep across the barnyard to the corrals. This method was eventually discontinued, however, and the goats dispatched.)



Coming Into the Main Ranch.

When the last band of sheep is crossing the barnyard, through clouds of dust, the riders appear a short distance behind them. There are husky bleats and occasional whoops to urge on the laggards, and some snapping of *chirriões*. Though the lambing season is over, there are some late lambs; one or two vaqueros are carrying the tired, hungry latecomers before them on their saddles. A few men dismount and urge onward the older stragglers. (When we are at the Island during the *corridas*, we make pets of the *lepes* (orphans), bottle-feeding them.)



End of the Roundup. The sheep are being driven across the barnyard to the shearing shed.

At length the heavy gates close on the hindmost sheep. Plaintive bleating and milling continue for a while. The dust settles in the great barnyard as the men unsaddle, wash up, and rest or sharpen their shears for the morrow's shearing. The first bell on the knoll behind the kitchen starts ringing. The men stroll toward the whitewashed stone mess hall and line up along a railing till the dinner bell rings. Tomorrow the shearing shed will be the center of activity.

PART II—ISLAND SHEARING

Departure of the vaqueros for the Island roundups and shearing provided the opportunity for a gala occasion. I am picturing one of these farewell events from my memory of my father's amused recounting of those happenings, going back to the time of his father, Justinian Caire.

It is a windless day in spring. The Santa Barbara Harbor lies smooth as glass. Green water laps almost noiselessly around the horny red barnacles of the wharf piles. Above, the broad planks of the wharf resound with merrymaking. While the vaqueros wait for wind to swell the canvas of the *Star of Freedom*, or, some years later, for the schooner *Santa Cruz* (built in 1894), to get under way, they waste no spleen with fevered impatience and frustration at delay.

With light hearts they enjoy the time with their wives, mothers, sweethearts and children. Several have their guitars. Honored among them are those who have the gift of the troubadour—the poet-musicians. One makes a circle of the ladies, saluting each with a bow and doffing his hat with a flourish before beginning. Then strumming his guitar, he improvises complimentary songs suitable to each. There is a round of applause, an eager flashing of black eyes as the audience congratulates the vaquero.

November 12, 1884

The schooner Santa Rosa arrived in our harbor yesterday from Santa Cruz Island with 100 head of fine sheep on board consigned to I. K. Fisher. ("In Old Santa Barbara," compiled by Stella Rouse. Santa Barbara News-Press.)

The group passes the time happily dancing on the rough wharf planks, singing plaintive, sentimental old songs, laughing at jokes and yarns, chatting and gossiping. At last the breeze comes up, announcing the wind that will blow the groups of leave-takers apart, or, in later days, the engine of the *Santa Cruz* starts, announcing she will soon be weighing anchor.

At this point, more often than not, my grandfather (later my father or his brother Arthur) is accosted by a vaquero, announcing that Angel or some other *compadre* is not here.

"But where is Angel? He was here a while ago."

"Si, Don Justiniano," comes the answer. "*¿Que sea in dificultades?*"—Might he be in difficulties?

From long experience my grandfather knows that this sudden news, so delicately put in Californio-Spanish, could mean only one thing. With a word to the other vaqueros that they should prepare to leave soon and that they are not to stray back to town, he hurries down the wharf to the little old city jail.

There, sure enough, is Angel—unangelically and blissfully bleary-eyed. Then Justinian Caire hurries to the court with a word to the judge. Angel is brought to court. The wise judge knows that the vaquero will be in a much safer and healthier climate and earning an honest living to boot on the Island ranch. Thus, after hearing the plea of guilty, he pronounces sentence, then suspends it. He urges the erring Angel to see that he does not over-imbibe in the future and further orders him to leave at once for the Island. The vaquero, chastened though still rather incoherent, meekly agrees; much to his satisfaction when he sobers up, he finds himself on ship-board somewhere on the Santa Barbara Channel, on his way to the Main Ranch.

The shearing shed is humming with life. Between seasons the large building is silent. But now the *trasquila* (the shearing in Islandese) is on in full force. The snip, snip, snip of shears is heard hour after hour. There is the tap, tap, tap of the sheep as they are pulled on three legs out of the corral, the thud as they are jerked over



Shearing Shed and Covered Corral. The weighing and packing portion of the shed is to the right of the picture.

on their backs, the bleating of sheep in the pens, the shuffling of feet as the vaqueros bring up each fleece and get the *fichas* in return, snatches of song, little talk.

A great number of sheep brought in on each roundup are driven into the huge roofed corral directly in front of the shearing shed. From there, some sheep are herded into a long runway all along the length of the shearing area. When it is filled to the end, heavy gates on rollers are closed, separating the runway into small pens. Except for fencing, this side of the shearing shed is unwallled. A narrow gate from each pen opens into the shearing area. While the *trasquila* is on, most of the activity takes place in this section of the long double building. After all the sheep in the pens are shorn, the gates are rolled back. The sheep are driven out into an immense corral and another band is driven into the runway.

When all the sheep are shorn, they are separated: those for market are turned into certain fields to be trucked down to Prisoners' Harbor and shipped to the mainland aboard the schooner *Santa Cruz*, which crosses the channel frequently during this season. The rest are driven back to their territory, the number in each section being determined by the nature of the terrain and the amount of feed available.

During the shearing, the *mayordomo* perches himself in the high seat built in the narrow space joining the two sections of the shearing shed. Across his knees is a wooden shelf with a number of slits in its broad surface. Into them he slips small metal disks or *fichas*, about the size of a penny, stamped with a cross for Santa Cruz on one side, with the company's initials, "S.C.I.Co," on the other. Passing from hand to hand for over sixty years, the *fichas* are worn thin.

January 13, 1910

The Santa Cruz Island schooner, Captain George Nidever¹, came in from the island yesterday with a cargo of 13,000 pounds of the fall wool clip. A cargo brought in Tuesday amounted to 25,000 pounds. Captain Nidever stated that there were several cargoes yet to be brought over. The fall clip is the smaller one of the year and the spring shearing is expected to double the present output. Owing to the heavy early rains, the spring clip will be in a much cleaner condition. ("In Old Santa Barbara," compiled by Stella Rouse. Santa Barbara News-Press).

When a vaquero has shorn a sheep, he wraps the fleece into a bundle, tosses it on one of the broad shelves flanking both sides of the seat, and takes a *ficha* to keep tabs on the number of sheep he has shorn. At the end of each day's *trasquila*, the vaqueros form a long queue in the office. The *fichas* of each are taken and recorded to his account. In addition to his wages, the vaquero's record of *fichas* adds to his pay. (A thousand years from now, if some anthropologist should dig up one of these tokens, I wonder what he would call it.)

The vaquero then makes his way among the shearers to one of the whetting stones set on narrow shelves along the wall. He dips his shears into a small barrel of water on the floor beside each shelf. He rubs the blades on the stone, dips them occasionally into the water, and runs his fingers a bit away from the edge of the blades to test their sharpness. When he is satisfied, he chooses a sheep from a pen (a specified number of shearers draw sheep from each pen), and pulls it out by a hind leg. He bends to his work once more. Snip, snip, snip—the fleece falls away from the animal.

One may ask why the old method of shearing is still in use. A number of years ago, shearing machines were installed. The oldtimers tried them for a while, but in a short time went back to the shears. A speedy shearer can gather a very tidy number of *fichas* by the end of the day. Besides, these men must not only be professional shearers, but vaqueros as well, able to ride over rugged country while rounding up sheep.

Everyone is busy. Most of the vaqueros are bare-headed, and shocks of hair fall over their foreheads as they bend to their work. One vaquero keeps his hat glued to his head all day. Another knots the four corners of a red cotton bandanna and wears it snugly on his crown. He is rather old, but nimble and strong. At intervals he sings snatches of songs in a good baritone.

The ditty of ditties in this busy place, however, used to be sung by Nini Ayala who prided himself on being the oldest Island vaquero. He rode the Island ranges for more than sixty years. He might be looking over the pen for a sheep, sharpening his shears, or walking up to get his *ficha*—the old refrain was chanted over and over when he was in the mood:

Ay, ay, ay!
Y mas ay, ay!
Parece que llueve,
Es agua que cae . . .

To translate roughly:

Oh, dear me!
Many dear me's!
It seems to be raining.
It's water that falls.

This amusing, foolish sing-song went on and on. However, Nini never chose another. Nini's roundup and *trasquila* days are over now. The ancient beams of the shearing shed must surely miss that long repeated chant and the jaunty, humorous little old man who intoned it.

There is little talk during the shearing but once in a while there are brief verbal exchanges and sometimes a wager. A vaquero—let's call him Juan—has almost finished shearing a large sheep with a heavy fleece which lies like a soft rug on the stout planks of the floor. Someone—Ramón, perhaps—says, "I bet you that weighs almost twenty pounds, eh?"

"Bah," answers the perspiring Juan. "Thirty pounds."

A few nearby shearers pause to chip in with their views. At last Juan replies with finality, "Thirty. I bet you a cigar."

"Twenty," replies Ramón.

"Done!"

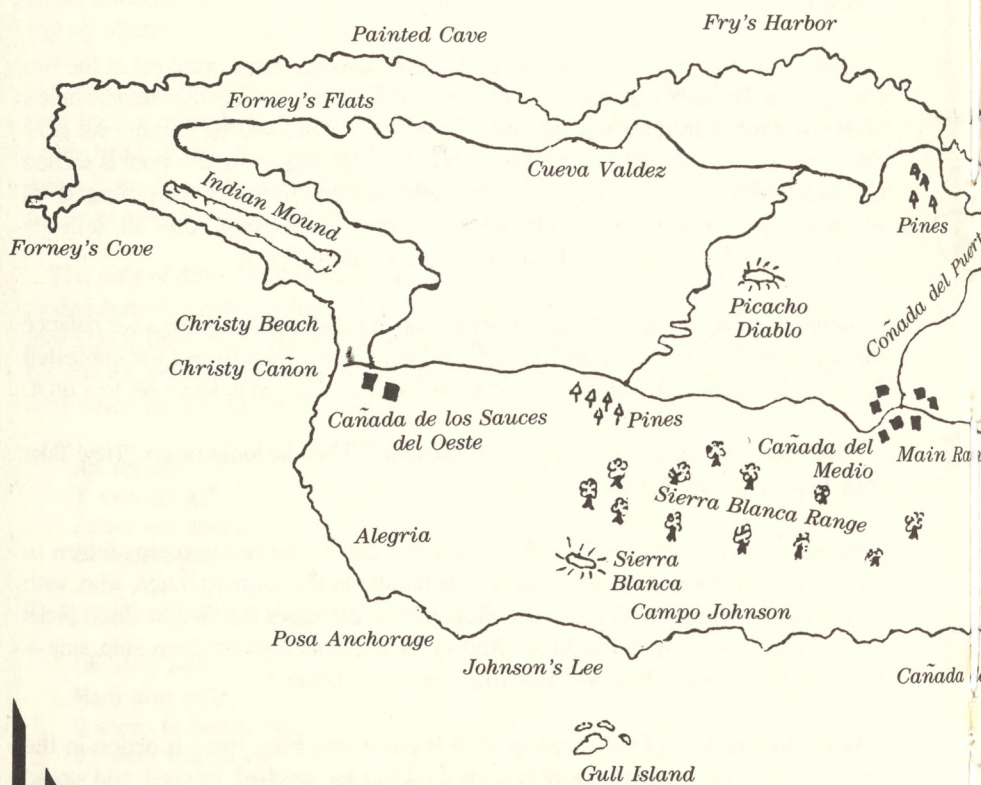
Juan, laughing, bundles up the fleece. Others exchange more opinions as the two vaqueros make their way past one of the broad shelves beside the *mayordomo's* high seat, but Juan does not toss his bundle on it. Followed by Ramón, he goes through a low gate into the second section of the building where the wool is sacked and weighed. The wool packer from his height near the beams of the ceiling, gives his views, and so does anyone else who happens to be nearby. After all, a fleece of thirty pounds is almost as fabulous as the Golden Fleece.

Ramón removes the three hundred or so pound weight marker on the scale balance for weighing the wool sacks and adjusts the lightest one. Juan throws the contested fleece on the scale and, with a wink at the packer up on his perch, keeps his foot on it.

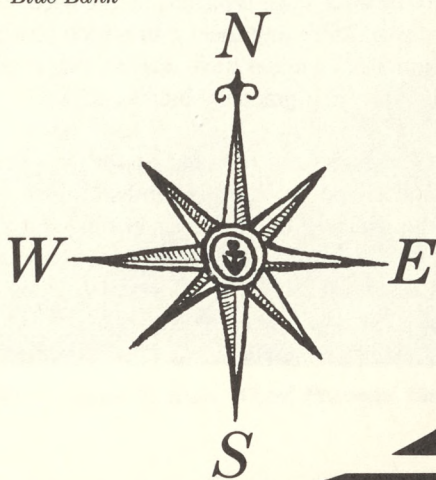
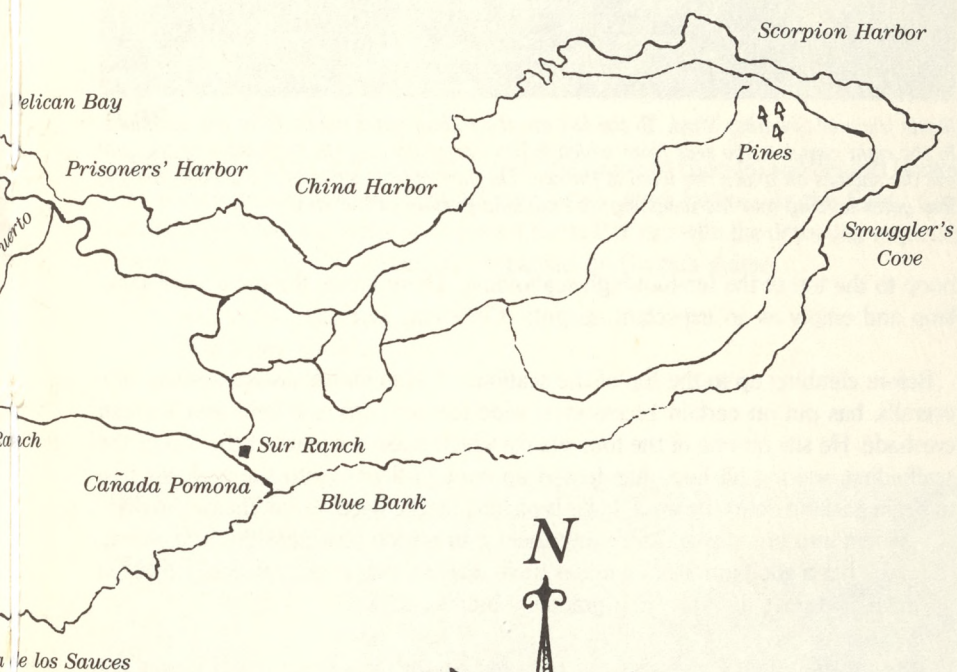
"Forty pounds!" murmurs Ramón. "*¿Es posible?*" Then he looks down. "Hey! Take your foot off there, *hombre!*"

Twenty-five—but that's quite a fleece just the same! The two vaqueros return to the shearers' section. Juan gives the woolly bundle to the vaquero, Lugo, who, with a light cord, ties up the fleeces. The *mayordomo* discusses the weight. Juan picks up a *ficha* and resharpenes his shears. And so the *trasquila* goes on: Snip, snip, snip—tap, tap, tap—ba-a-a, ba-a-a—"Bet you a cigar"—"Done!"

While this section of the shearing shed is constantly busy, there is action in the other section, also. Here the wool is packed into sacks, weighed, marked, and stored till it is trucked down to the warehouse at Prisoners' Harbor to await its trip to the mainland. Luis Hammond, the packer, with the help of Lugo has just rolled a heavy, filled sack toward its brothers and is now making ready a new one. He wets the open end of the burlap to prevent slippage or tearing and adjusts it with a strong



Santa Cruz Island





Inside View of Shearing Shed. To the left are the rolling gates which form the partitions. In the right center is the seat from which fleeces are given out. On both sides of the seat are the shelves on which the wool is thrown. On the opposite sides of the shelves are the low gates leading into the weighing and packing portion of the shed.

hoop to the top of the ten-foot-high scaffolding. There hangs the great wool sack, limp and empty as an expectant, gigantic Christmas stocking.

Before climbing up to the top of the scaffolding, Hammond, always wearing bib-overalls, has put on certain accessories: wide leather cuffs and belt, and a green eyeshade. He sits on one of the four planks which make a square at the top of the scaffolding, waiting till Lugo has tossed up enough fleeces into the sack for him to begin packing down the wool. Lugo is picking up the fleeces from the two shelves, tying them into bundles and throwing them into a wide stall near the scaffolding. When he has a good number, he tosses them upward. Fleece after fleece is gobbled up in the yawning mouth of the gradually bulging sack.

At intervals, Hammond seizes the rope hanging from a beam directly over the opening of the sack and disappears into the depths below to pack down the wool. Now and again he heaves himself up on the heavy rope and sits on one of the top boards, mopping his forehead with a dark blue bandanna while Lugo tosses more fleeces into the insatiable wool sack. Then down goes Hammond once more. He is like wood on rising water. At the start he is invisible. As he rises to the surface, first his head appears, then his shoulders, till, when the ravenous sack is filled, he emerges completely.

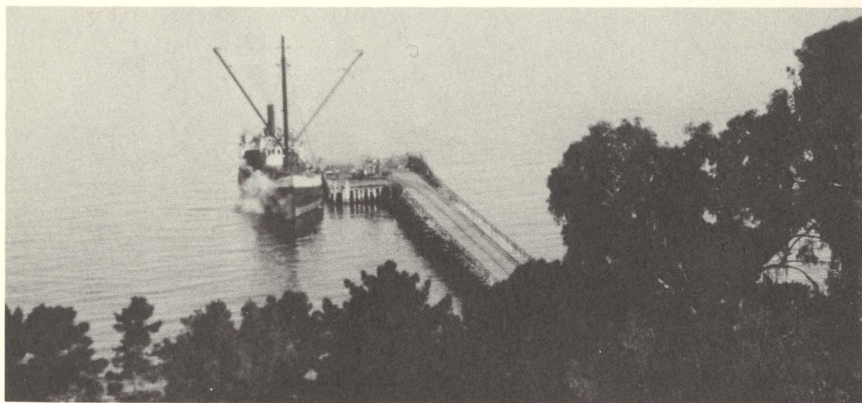
Having propped heavy boards against the sack with the help of Lugo, Hammond climbs again to loosen the hoop at the top. Then the men ease the sack down to lie lengthwise. With a curved giant's needle and heavy thread, Hammond begins sewing up the end of the sack, leaving small "ears" at each corner to facilitate handling. Now the men roll the sack to the scale. The weight is recorded and the sack rolled over to join others of its kind.

Hammond stencils in black paint the company initials: "S.C.I.Co." and the number of the sack on the rough burlap. He surveys his work and is pleased with the result. (In olden times the wool sacks were marked with red pigment found in Indian mounds. Centuries ago, the Island Chumash used it for coloring their designs.)

After the *trasquila* is over, the wool sacks will be hauled from the red brick warehouse at Prisoners' Harbor and trucked to the end of the wharf.² The wool will be shipped to the mainland by coastal steamer—the *Humboldt* or the *Celilo*.³ The sheep, after being conveyed by truck to the wharf, will be shipped on the *Santa Cruz*. (In early days one of the small flock of imported Angora goats was trained to lead the sheep to the wharf.)

With the roundups and shearing all over, the vaqueros check in saddles and bridles. The shearing shed will be silent till next year's work begins. As the *Santa Cruz* weighs anchor and turns her prow toward Santa Barbara with the departing vaqueros, one still hears the old refrain, accompanied by Garcia's guitar:

*A Dios, a Dios, amores,
A Dios, patria querida,
A Dios, patria querida,
Me voy a retirar...*



Steamer Humboldt at the Wharf, Prisoners' Harbor.

NOTES

- 1 George Nidever, captain of the *Santa Cruz* at one time, was the son of George Nidever, well-known in the history of sea otter hunting around the island. *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever* (1802-1883), edited by Henry Ellison, University Press, Berkeley, California, 1937, is the interesting autobiography of this pioneer.
- 2 The shipping itself is well-described by my father in answer to an inquiry from the Santa Barbara *News-Press*:

In early years the island was stocked with sheep and cattle which were shipped to the mainland in the "Santa Cruz" or directly to San Francisco by coasting steamers, loaded at the island wharf at Prisoners' Harbor. In days before the Santa Barbara harbor had been developed, sheep cargoes were lightered ashore, while cattle were cast overboard to swim to land. After Los Angeles had established stockyards, livestock was shipped directly to Santa Barbara and from there trucked to Los Angeles, or shipped directly to the southern city by way of the port of San Pedro. Throughout the years, the wool was shipped the same way as the livestock, for ultimate delivery in Boston or Philadelphia, where its quality was well-known to buyers.
- 3 On the white facade of Spenger's, the well-known seafood restaurant in Berkeley, CELILO is clearly painted in black—part of the old vessel far from its moorings?

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
PUBLISHED WEEKLY
CHICAGO, ILL., MAY 1, 1919

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Carey Stanton was born in Los Angeles in 1923, fourteen years before his parents bought the western nine-tenths of Santa Cruz Island. From that time to the present, Dr. Stanton's enjoyment of his island home has remained a constant in his life. In his words:

I had the unique experience of spending all my school vacations and as much other time as possible on our 55,000-acre island ranch. It was truly a wonderful place to grow up, a marvelously-preserved, 19th century working cattle ranch.

A graduate of Stanford University School of Medicine, I worked in internal medicine and pathology for about ten years and then, overtaken by good sense, I returned to Santa Cruz Island in 1957. The ranch records indicate that my return was on the tenth of April, twenty years to the day after my parents acquired the Island. It was, in retrospect, the wisest decision of my life.

Marla Daily began her work on Santa Cruz Island in 1973, just after completing her B. A. in Anthropology from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Today she divides her time and talent between field research on the island and the recording and analysis of these findings at Channel Islands Archives, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Her projects include: researching the island's history and documenting and cataloging island artifacts, memorabilia, and ranch records which date back to the 1880s.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

by Marla Daily and Carey Stanton

Santa Cruz Island is the largest (ninety-six square miles) of the four northern Channel Islands and is located twenty-five miles off the mainland coast of Santa Barbara. It is larger than Washington, D.C., and four times the size of the island of Manhattan! Its unique history and chain of ownership is an anomaly among California properties. Rather than the number of landowners increasing through land divisions with time, Santa Cruz Island remains owned by only two concerns and is relatively undeveloped by today's standards.

The first known inhabitants of Santa Cruz Island were the Chumash Indians and their ancestors. Radiocarbon dating shows that the island was inhabited at least as long ago as seven thousand years¹ As the Chumash left no written record, information about their island cultures is primarily gathered through archaeological examination.

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, probably the first European explorer to reach the coast of California, wrote of the Santa Barbara Channel in his journals of 1542. His is the first written account known to include mention of the island, although he called it by a different name. Continuing through the next two and one half centuries, at least four explorers, including Cermeño in 1595, Vizcaino in 1602, Portolá in 1769, and Vancouver in 1795, charted and wrote of Santa Cruz Island. Portolá's expedition is credited with naming the island "Isla de Santa Cruz," and Vancouver's charts finalized the names of all the northern Channel Islands. These early European explorers were more concerned with the California mainland and tended to pay little attention to the islands. Some did stop for wood and water in passing.²

In 1769, Santa Cruz Island (along with all of California) became vested in the King of Spain. During Spain's ownership, Chumash Indians continued to live on the island although decreasing in numbers until, in 1822, the last of the Chumash left Santa Cruz Island to live on the mainland.³ No Europeans are known to have settled on the island during the Spanish era, and presumably the island was "deserted" for many decades with perhaps the exception of a few seasonal fish camps scattered about the island's shores.

In 1821, after Mexico's long and successful revolt against Spain, California became part of the new Republic of Mexico. On July 20, 1838, the President of Mexico directed the Governor of California, Juan Bautista Alvarado, to grant lands to Mexican citizens who had performed various patriotic services. On May 22, 1839, Governor Alvarado conveyed the Island of Santa Cruz to Captain Andres Castillero. Specified in the



Rancho and Valley Santa Cruz Island, *Watercolor by James Madison Alden, 1855. The earliest known view of the Central Valley, the painting bears evidence of the existence of animal husbandry and agriculture at this date.*

grant was the island's description "... in extent of eleven square leagues and no more, and has for its boundaries the water's edge."⁴ With this grant, Castellero became the first private owner of Santa Cruz Island, and he held that status for eighteen years (1839-1857).

Soon after California was admitted to statehood in 1850, the United States government appointed a Board of Land Commissioners to settle civil questions of California land ownership. Title to all land previously granted by the Spanish and Mexican governments during their rule in the newly formed State of California had to be proved by the owner before the Land Commission, according to United States law. In the case of Santa Cruz Island, on April 13, 1852, Andres Castellero filed his petition to secure confirmation of his title. His petition was repeatedly challenged and he was kept in court for twelve years. On November 7, 1864, the final necessary document was recorded by the United States Supreme Court, which confirmed Castellero's title as sole owner of Santa Cruz Island. In the meantime, however, Castellero had sold his interest in the island!

During the latter part of Castellero's ownership of Santa Cruz Island, Dr. James B. Shaw, an English physician residing in Santa Barbara, supervised the island. He is thought to have introduced to the island the French Merino sheep and perhaps the ancestors of the now feral pigs. During Shaw's management, the first known ranch house was built in the island's Central Valley in 1855.⁵ After Castellero sold the island in 1857 to William Barron of Barron, Forbes & Company of San Francisco, Shaw continued to supervise the island for an additional twelve years.

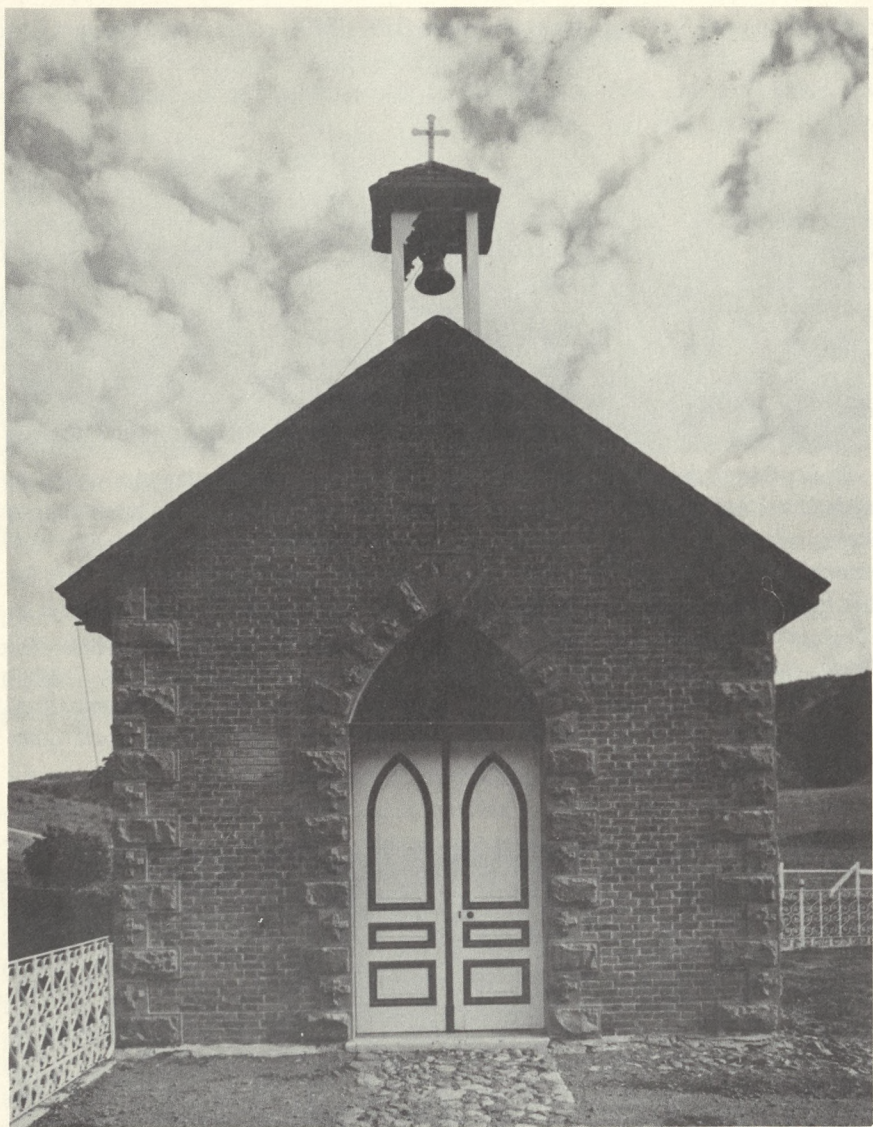
Barron owned the island for twelve years (1857-1869), until he sold it to ten San Franciscans, directors of a French savings bank, who formed a corporation called the Santa Cruz Island Company. This was the first time that the island had been owned by more than one person.

Before Barron's 1869 sale, very little had been done in the way of ranching development. Improvement began under the ownership of the Santa Cruz Island Company—its president and most active shareholder being a Frenchman from San Francisco named Justinian Caire. Within the course of twelve years, Caire bought out his nine partners in the corporation and became the sole owner of Santa Cruz Island by 1880. In that same year he paid his first visit to the island to survey his holdings and pursue the planning of what was to become one of the most prosperous, well-managed and beautiful ranches and vineyards in the entire state.

Under Caire's direction, the Santa Cruz Island Company developed a variety of agricultural and ranching endeavors. Buildings including ranch houses, bunk houses, barns, wineries, a chapel, mess hall, blacksmith shop and saddle shop were constructed. Wherever possible, native island materials were used. Kilns were built for the manufacture of bricks and limestone mortar. Stones were quarried and cut to shape on the island. A resident blacksmith forged wrought iron fittings, railings and hinges used on many of the buildings. Full-time employees included masons, a wagon maker, carpenters, painters, team drivers, dairymen, a butcher, vintners, grape-pickers, sheep-shearers, and a sea captain and sailors to run the Santa Cruz Island Company's sixty-foot schooner.



Aerial View of Santa Cruz Island with Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands in the Distance, 1964.

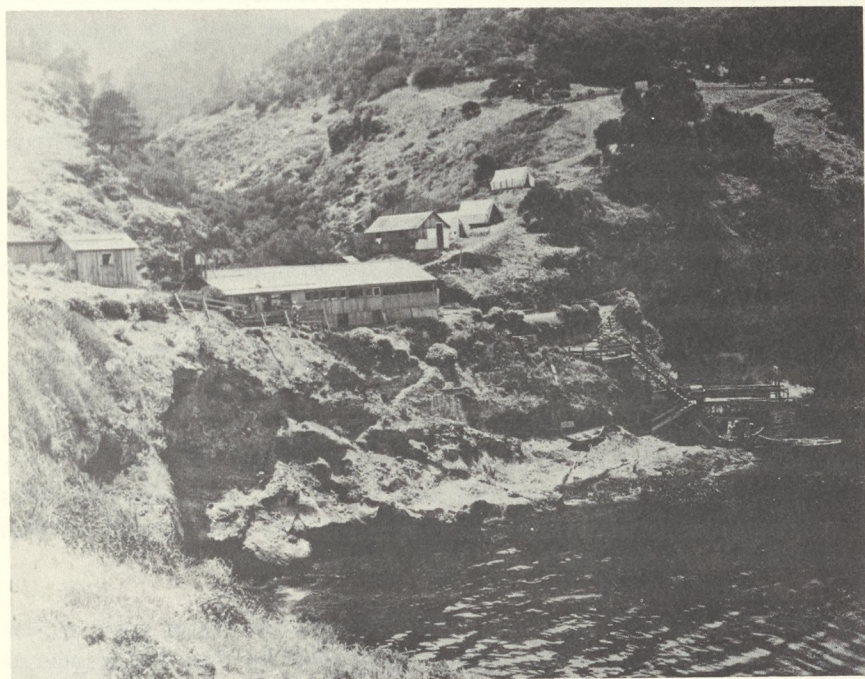


Chapel of the Holy Cross, Santa Cruz Island, 1964. The wrought-iron fencing surrounding the chapel, built in 1891, was handmade on the island.



Wineries, Santa Cruz Island, 1938. In 1950, the wineries were gutted by fire. Today the walls have been lowered and the buildings reroofed.

The island was a very efficient operation and almost entirely a self-contained one. Flour, sugar and coffee were among the few staples which were required from the mainland. Temporary extra labor was brought to the island from Santa Barbara



Pelican Bay, Santa Cruz Island, 1920s. Today just a few foundations and plantings remain as evidence of this resort run by Ira Eaton.



Prisoners' Harbor, Santa Cruz Island, 1964. Prisoners' Harbor remains the main point of entry for supplies and shipping of livestock.

during sheep-shearing and grape-picking time. The wine which was made was shipped in bulk in kegs to San Francisco where it was bottled. (No known bottle of Santa Cruz wine exists today.) A vast number of acres of oat hay and alfalfa were cultivated to keep the draft horses fed. All of the work on the island's ninety-six square miles was done on horseback or with the aid of wagons. Justinian Caire's masterly plan for the island is unequalled.

In December, 1897, Justinian Caire died, having transferred all of the stock in the Santa Cruz island Company to his beloved wife, Albina.⁶ Extensive litigation within the Caire family followed until, in 1925, the island was partitioned. The easterly 6,600 acres remained with the Caire descendants who were the dissenters in the family litigation, and the westerly 54,000 acres were offered for sale. This nine-tenths of Santa Cruz island remained on the market until 1937 when Edwin L. Stanton purchased it.

For the first two years of his ownership, Edwin Stanton tried to revive and improve the sheep business. It was a difficult task because the sheep had become accustomed to life in the wild and would not cooperate with roundup and shearing efforts. Emphasis was then switched to cattle, and polled Herefords were introduced. They remain the mainstay of the island's ranching operation today.

Edwin Stanton died in 1963 and management of the Santa Cruz Island Company passed to his son Carey. The island continues to be operated in much the same manner as a nineteenth century California ranch was. It offers a very special window into the past, with a twentieth century emphasis being placed on preservation and ecology. In the year 2008, the Santa Cruz Island Company holdings will pass to The Nature Conservancy, an organization dedicated to land preservation. The eastern tip of Santa Cruz Island, which remains in the ownership of Caire family descendants, is slated to become a part of our National Park System at an unknown future date.

NOTES

This article was first printed in the Fall 1983 edition of *La Reata*, the quarterly publication of the Santa Barbara Corral of the Westerners, copyright retained by Marla Daily and Carey Stanton.

- 1 Glassow, M.A., 1980. "Recent Developments in the Archaeology of the Channel Islands" in D. D. Power, ed., *The California Islands: Proceedings of a Multidisciplinary Symposium*. Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, pp. 79-99. Glassow lists 7140 ± 210 radiocarbon year B.P. for a sample taken from Punta Arena, Santa Cruz Island.
- 2 Dana, Richard Henry, (1964). *Two Years Before the Mast*. Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles.
- 3 Johnson, John, 1982. "An Ethnohistoric Study of the Island Chumash." Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of California at Santa Barbara, p. 195. Johnson lists baptismal records of Chumash Indians from Santa Cruz Island in 1822.
- 4 March 21, 1897 (Patent Date). "Transcript of the Proceedings in Case No. 176. *Andres Castillero, Claimant, vs. The United States, Defendant*, for the Island of Santa Cruz."
- 5 Stenzel, Franz, 1975. *James Madison Alden, Yankee Artist on the Pacific Coast, 1854-1860*. Amon Carter Museum, Ft. Worth, Texas, page 50, plate 15, "Rancho and Valley Santa Cruz Island, California, 1855" watercolor 7" \times 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". This is the earliest known view of Santa Cruz Island. It shows a man on horseback, some haystacks and fowl, establishing agriculture and animal husbandry on the island at least as early as 1855.
- 6 Caire, Helen, 1982. "A Brief History of Santa Cruz Island from 1869-1937" in *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Summer 1982, pp. 1-33.



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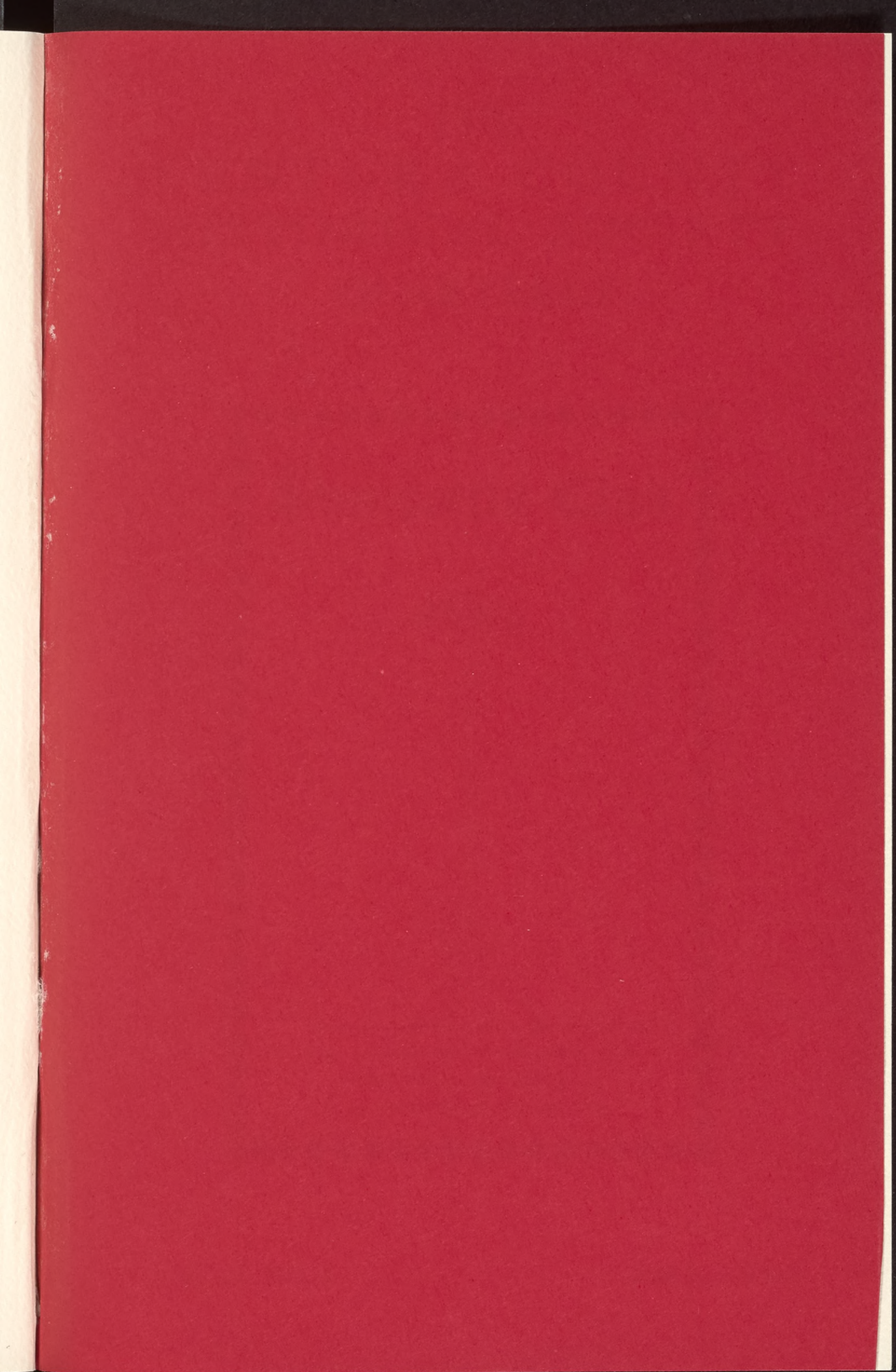
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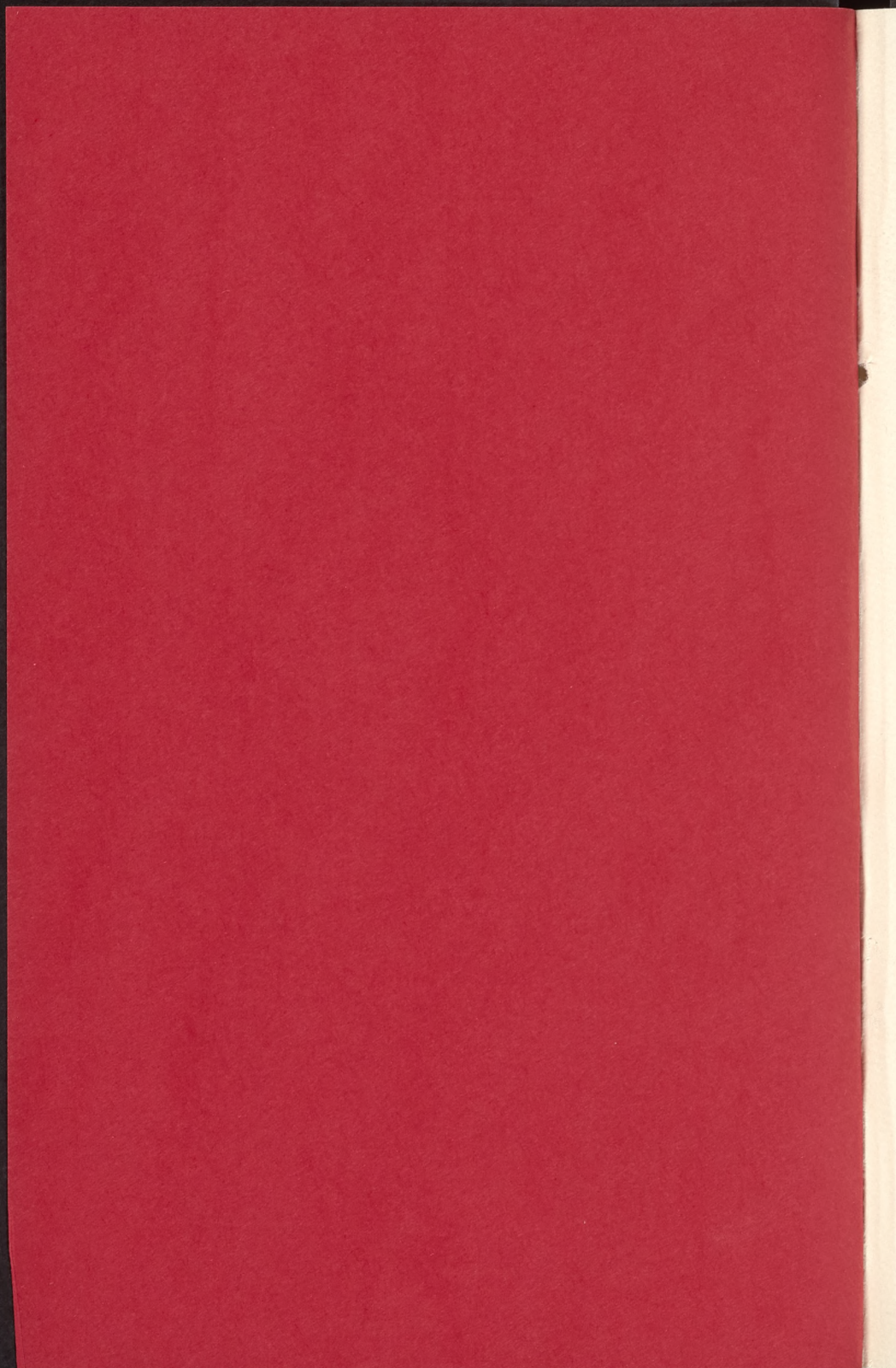
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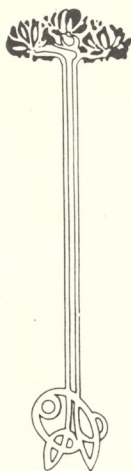




THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY



Poinsettia Club



*"There is so much bad in the best of us,
And so much good in the worst of us,
That it behooves each of us
To be charitable to the rest of us."*

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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Cover illustration by Joan Word. Central logo is from the first Poinsettia Club Yearbook, 1905. Lettering and border are from the Yearbook of 1906. Club motto first appeared in minutes of May, 1922.

Map of Lower Saticoy, page 5. Artwork by Arte Duval Donlon; graphics by Joan Word.

Sharp family photos from the Pat Alderson collection. Remaining photographs from the collection of Alice Duval Underwood.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: The following manuscript represents the efforts of a great number of people. In early 1984, in anticipation of the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Poinsettia Club of Saticoy, the members of the club decided the time had come to tell their story. Interested club members spent most of their spare time and more of their energies for two years examining memorabilia and researching and recopying the original minutes lodged in the archives of the Ventura County Historical Museum. These dedicated ladies were as follows:

Mary Bliss
Gerry Hair
Mary Kitchen
Rosena Kitchen
Virgene Nuckols
Betty Perkins

Betty Powell
Fauvette Rollison
Becky Savage
Suzanne Saw
Alice Duval Underwood
Sara Jane Underwood

Betty Norton directed the operation with the assistance of Arte Duval Donlon and Ruth Dudley. Mary Alice Henderson then compressed these minutes into 150 pages of excerpts--a valuable memento for the club.

To the above, add some valuable leads from librarian Alberta Word, six more months of research and two of sifting, weighing and adjusting material on the part of your editor and Voila! The ladies are at last in print! It is sincerely hoped that the following catches the spirit of yesterday's and moves the hearts of today's ladies of the Poinsettia Club of Saticoy.

Patricia Clark Callachor,
Editor

THE POINSETTIA CLUB OF SATICOY

The Early Years

CHARTER DAY

The year is 1899. An ebullient, self-confident America has taken control of the Philippine Islands following Senate ratification of the treaty ending the Spanish-American War. Teddy Roosevelt had captured the headlines and virtually ended his "splendid little war" just the year before with his famous charge up San Juan Hill. William McKinley makes headlines in the fall of '99 with his own adventure. By taking a ride in a Stanley Steamer, he becomes the first President to ride in an automobile. Americans are singing "She Was Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage" and dancing to the strains of Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag."

The little town of Saticoy, County of Ventura, State of California, has further reason to celebrate. The terrible drought of the mid-1890s has been circumvented by the drilling of deep wells into the Saticoy Springs. The orchards, on which all depend for their livelihood, have been saved. In addition, three and one-half miles of pipe have been laid along the county road to Ventura, with line tanks and hydrants at convenient intervals for "sprinkling purposes....The smooth, dustless wagon-way, trees green and glassy in the sunlight, buildings clean and fresh as if just from the hands of the painter"¹ is justly celebrated by the local newspaper. This same system supplies the ranch owners on either side of the road with water for domestic purposes and "to freshen lawn and flower beds."²

June 14 of the year 1899, Miss Anna Campbell, 36 years of age, has invited a group of ladies to her home for the purpose of organizing the Saticoy Literary and Social Club. Miss Campbell and her friends are all residents of West Saticoy, the "Knob Hill" of the area. Their husbands and fathers are farmers or merchants serving farmers, most being members of the Walnut Growers' Association, the Saticoy Water Company (organized 1897) and the Saticoy Regulators (formation, 1883).³



*Artesian Well
Saticoy
1897*

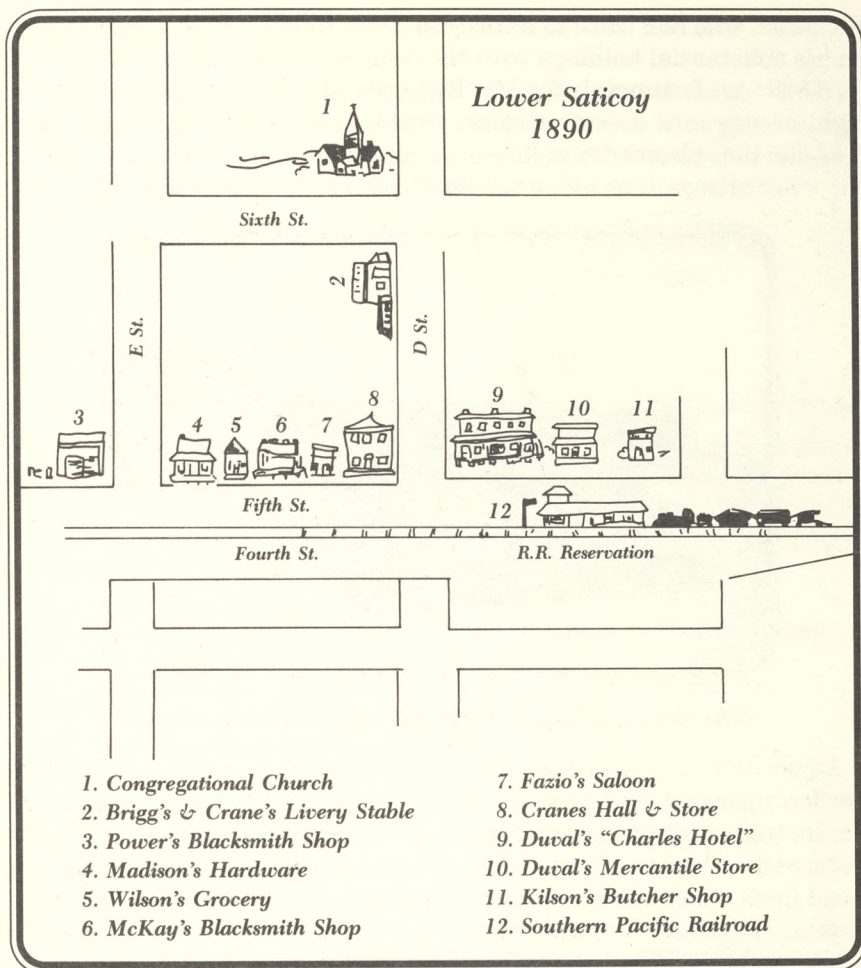
All are Republican, if not Prohibition, with the exception of the Layne family, who had moved to Saticoy from Texas in 1891. In the words of William Robert Layne, nine years of age at the time of the move:

I was rather stunned to find myself in a world of rank Republicans; the only other Democrat was a boy who came from a family of very doubtful morals and no social standing, who lives down towards Lower Town and forgathered with the "Whiskey Ring" down there. This bothered me,--that the more elect socially and morally were Republicans and "Yankees." But I had little time to reflect much about this; fighting on the school ground was of almost daily occurrence, and he who wouldn't fight at the "drop of the hat" was a coward and his lot was hard and humiliating.⁴

The scene of young Layne's battles is the Saticoy School, established 1871.

The "Other Saticoy," known as "East Saticoy," "Lower Town," "Tar Flats," or "Coyoteville," is approximately one-half mile in distance from West Saticoy, but, as one might have gathered from the above report, miles apart in philosophy. Again, according to W. R. Layne:

The two sections were separated by...several miles of political antipathy as pertained to the liquor business, but bound together by the School District and certain necessary elements of village life that each one possessed to the exclusion of the other. That is, Lower Town, that portion located near the Rail Road, had the Rail Road Depot, and the Upper Town had no



such blessing, while the Upper Town had the Post Office and the Lower Town had to come to the Upper Town to get its mail. Lower Town had several saloons, and Upper Town had none. Upper Town had three churches, Lower Town only one, so that the residents of Upper Town felt morally immeasurably superior to the citizens of the Lower Town, and were rather smug in their bearing.⁴

Why two Saticoy? The first Saticoy, Saticoy Superior geographically if not morally, had been laid out by William De Forest Richards.

Richards, who had come to Saticoy in 1868, fully intended to capitalize on his substantial holdings with the coming of the railroad, scheduled for 1887. Unfortunately for Mr. Richards, the S. P. chose to purchase right-of-way in a lower but considerably less expensive location and "Coyoteville" bloomed into flower almost overnight. The road joining the two Saticoy runs along the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks.



The Saticoy Depot, Fifth Street, Lower Saticoy

Adjacent to the road between the two settlements is a large vegetable garden operated by Chinese. These "strange yellow men wore blue denim trousers and jumpers, woven bamboo baskets on their heads for hats, and each wore a long 'queue' of hair, braided and coiled around the head upon which rested the bamboo basket hat."⁶ They live in fragile looking shacks on the corner of the property and provide our ladies with a luxurious supply of vegetables, reasonably priced and always fresh. "One bought what was needed for a couple of days, the peddler jotted down the items in Chinese with a lead pencil on the side of the house, and once a month, he was paid up."⁷ The Chinese community supplies most of our ladies with cooks and does their laundry as well. The butcher's wagon follows a schedule similar to that of the vegetable cart.

Saticoy, that is, is keeping pace with the prosperity and affluence of mainstream America. Our ladies are no longer struggling pioneers; they have lovely homes, leisure time and, on June 14, 1899, are looking for a way to keep from stagnating "down on the farm."

THE CHARTER

Miss Anna Campbell is elected president of this charter group; Mrs. Lizzie (George) Kimball, vice president; Miss Jennie Sharp, secretary; Mrs. Jeanne Bell (Walter) Duval, treasurer. The preamble to their constitution states:

This club shall be organized for the mutual improvement and sociability of the members of which it shall be composed.

Good works would come later.

Membership, it is decided, will be limited to fifteen members, elected by secret ballot, "one negative ballot being sufficient for non-admittance." Meetings will be held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. Dues are to be twenty-five cents; however, "if any member shall absent herself from a meeting she shall be fined .05 for each absence."

The bylaws drawn up by the ten charter members are as follows:

1)The first two hours are to be occupied with literary work and the last half with refreshment and social intercourse. The refreshments must be limited to two articles to be served or not as the hostess pleases.

2)This club shall meet with its members in alphabetical order.

3)The leader for each meeting shall plan and conduct the literary works for that day. The first leader shall be appointed by the president and the others follow in alphabetical order.

4)This constitution may be amended at any time by a vote of three-fourths of the members of the club.

5)Members shall respond at roll call with a quotation from the author selected for that day or with a selection bearing on the subject under consideration.

"Thus," observes present member Mary Bliss, "was launched a club aimed at self-improvement and social interaction for women who probably had little other social diversion."

THE LADIES

Little is known about the club's first president, Anna Campbell--other than the fact that she came from Ohio to care for the twin children of Saticoy farmer, Edgar Campbell. Edgar's wife had died in December of 1889, just one month after the birth of the twins, Harry and Katherine. In 1900, Anna moved from the area, presumably to Los Angeles for in August of 1906, the regular meeting was "pleasantly interrupted by the arrival of two of the founders of the club, Agnes Clark and Anna Campbell...As they could not stay but a short time we decided to have the social half hour while they were with us, and a most delightful season it was....The ladies bade their good-byes and hurried off to the depot to catch the afternoon train bound for Los Angeles."

Vice President Emma B. Kellogg, wife of Saticoy farmer William E. Kellogg, had a membership of but one year's duration as well. Emma, twenty-eight years of age, and William had been married two years in June of 1899; their household included William's two children by his previous marriage, Willis (age 24) and Gertrude (age 20). The Kellogg family had come to Saticoy from Iowa in 1891 for the health of the first Mrs. Kellogg. In December of 1895, Esther Kellogg passed away at the age of 43.

The Kelloggs had a "commodious two story house with orchards of walnuts and apricots," cutting and pitting sheds, with a model fruit drying plant judged, by the *Ventura Free Press* of 1899, to be the best in the country. William managed the extensive acreage of William De Forest Richards, as well, employing more than 100 employees each season.

Secretary Jennie Sharp, age 21, was the daughter of two graduates of the State Normal School and two of the most powerful members of the Saticoy community. Father James Meikle Sharp had, as an eight-year-old child, crossed the plains by wagon train from Missouri to Oregon. The year was 1852. Seventeen years later, at age twenty-five, James moved to the San Francisco area of California where he worked as a bookkeeper, attended school, taught school and, on August 6 of 1874, married one of his classmates, Susanna Plank.

In 1876 the Sharps moved to Ventura County and purchased a ranch in the Santa Ana Valley. After six years of "hard sledding," the Santa



Jennie Sharp
Charter Member

Ana property (320 acres) was traded for "the Weldon Ranch," 150 acres of prime Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy land. Three thousand dollars cash was necessary to complete the bargain.

James prospered in Saticoy and repaid the community in kind--as high school trustee, as president of the Alta Mutual Water Company (irrigation), president of the Saticoy Water Company (domestic water), organizer and president of Farmers & Merchants Bank of Santa Paula, president of the Mupu Citrus Association, chairman of the Committee of Fifteen for Good Roads, organizer and director of People's Lumber

Company, president of the Saticoy Walnut Growers' Association, in addition to those organizations already listed on page 3.

Wife Susanna, who joined the club in 1903 was, first and foremost, a stalwart of the Saticoy Community Church. She was there when it was born--indeed, induced her husband to build the foundation of the edifice

in 1891--served on the finance or budget committee from the year of the church's formation in 1890 until her death in 1939. In addition, "Grandma Sharp" taught the young people's class; "her leadership and devotion to the church and its young people was a powerful strengthening influence for many years."⁸

If there were a member of the Saticoy Literary and Social Club who did not also attend the Sati-



Susanna (Mrs. J. M.) Sharp

coy Community Church, it has escaped the notice of this writer. The Sharps themselves were onetime Baptists; the Kelseys, Adventists--their father was the Adventist preacher; Eugene A. Duval considered himself to be a "Conditional Immortalist"; most, however, were Presbyterian-cum-Congregationalist. By 1909, the building which housed their services was the old Congregationalist Church moved from Lower to Upper Saticoy where it was joined to the abandoned Methodist church (founded by William De Forest Richards), the Presbyterian Church having moved to Oxnard. It was understood that the minister's wife had an open invitation to join the club.

Jennie remained an active and enthusiastic member of the club, with periodic absences for her travels, until her marriage June 26, 1902, to Herbert Guthrie. Mother Susanna (Mrs. J. M.) Sharp, herself, became a member in 1903.



*James and Susanna Sharp Home
Telegraph Road*

Perhaps the most extraordinary lady in this group of distinguished citizens was Grace Honora Sharp, James and Susanna's oldest child and the only other daughter amongst their eight children. Grace joined the club in its second year--1900. She was a member of the first graduating class of Santa Paula High School, one of the four girls to graduate. The year of the club's founding she was busy elsewhere--graduating from the Cooper Medical College (later Stanford University Medical School). This delicate five-foot 100-pound blonde was one of the few women to graduate from medical school at the time when graduation alone earned one a license in the state of California.⁹



Grace Honora Sharp

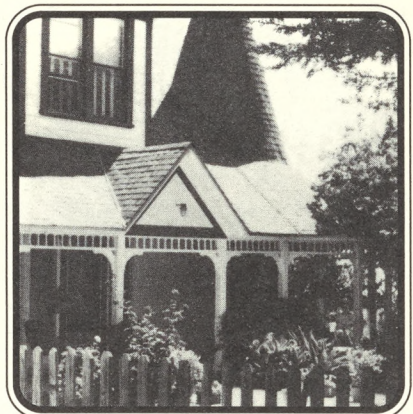
for the Saticoy Walnut Association and other local small businesses, earning much more than she had as a doctor. (Grace was to recall in later years that she seldom succeeded in collecting a fee during her five years of medical practice; when she did, it was hardly ever in "coin of the realm," but more often in kind; for example, two bales of hay on one occasion, a tom turkey on another.)¹⁰ She retained her license, however, and there were many calls to which Dr. Grace responded when no other doctor was available. She wrote a column for the *Santa Paula Chronicle*, as well, for the princely sum of \$10 per month. In her spare time, she served as school trustee, following in the footsteps of her father; "was active in all departments of the Saticoy Community Church"¹¹ as was her mother; and, following the death of Beatrice Todd Sharp in 1920, acted as mother for the four children of her brother, Hubert.¹²

In June of 1922, after an absence of twenty years, Mrs. Jennie Sharp Guthrie rejoined sister, Grace, and mother, Susanna, as an active member of the club. She and sister Grace provided much of the entertainment for the club's socials--Jennie with her "beautiful singing voice"; Grace, with her "thespian skills."

The "beautiful golden-haired" Jeanne Bell Duval, club treasurer, twenty years of age, had been married for two years to Walter H. Duval on founding day. She was soon to be a mother. Her father, William J. Bell, a prominent architect in the Los Angeles area, had abandoned his



Jeanne Bell (Mrs. Walter) Duval
Charter Member



William J. Bell Home
Telephone Road

career for reasons of health, and moved his family from Pasadena to Saticoy in 1890. Mr. Bell was one of the many veterans of the Civil War to make his home in California; he had carried the flag behind Sherman as he led his Union troops on the famous march through Georgia. In Saticoy, he supported his family with his apricot and walnut orchards. Jeanne and her brother, the "fiery, red-headed" Charles, "were pre-eminent in many of the more lively episodes of the community during the latter '90s."¹³ Charles's wife, the former Mary Sanchez, joined the club in 1900.

Jeanne's last year as a member was 1911. She and her twelve-year-old daughter, Laura, moved to Los Angeles where Laura attended Hollywood High School. Laura Duval Toomey is a present-day member of Poinsettia Club.

Charter member Agnes Booth Nicholl Clark, born in San Pablo, California, in April of 1865, was another graduate (1885) of State Normal School at San Jose, as was her husband Harry. Mr. Clark spent some years in the north of the state teaching school. Shortly after he and Agnes were married, July 27, 1887, they found their way to Saticoy where they "erected a handsome residence" on the 100 acres of "very choice land"¹⁴ deeded them by Agnes's father, John Nicholl. Mr. Clark managed as well the property adjoining his own land, owned by his father-in-law. The 900 acres was divided into 40-80-acre tracts which were let to tenant farmers. The Clarks' home ranch was planted to

apples, apricots and walnuts; lima beans and sugar beets were produced on the Nicholl property.

The first Clark daughter, Edna, future member of the Poinsettia Club, was born August 30, 1888, just after the move to Saticoy. (Undoubtedly, Agnes was assisted by her sister, Annie, married to Moses Wells, owner of the Saticoy Springs.) Agnes had a deep bass voice, "a decided asset to the congregational singing at the morning service," of the Presbyterian Church to which her father had donated "the wonderful bronze bell."¹⁵ After the departure of the Presbyterian Church for Oxnard, the Clarks became members of Saticoy Community Church.



***Agnes (Mrs. Harry F.) Clark
Charter Member
with Daughter Edna***

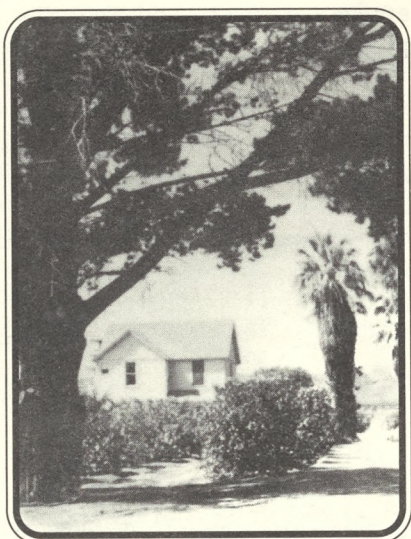


***Harry and Agnes Clark Home
Telephone Road***

Lula Layne, at 40 years of age one of the older charter members, had been born in Louisiana in 1859, educated in a Moravian School, and moved to Saticoy with husband William H. and their "three mischievous boys,"¹⁶ William Robert, Walker and Forest, in 1891. The Laynes had owned a sheep ranch in Texas, moved to Saticoy at the invitation of "Uncle George" Goode. George Goode's original 100 acres was divided, allowing William the 42-acre eastern portion, planted to Santa Barbara soft-shell walnuts (an innovation from the hard-shell variety in the early 1890s) and lima beans. Part of the bargain allowed the Laynes to live in the Goode house, provided that they board Uncle George. The Goode property was, as Robert recalled many years later, a far cry from the Texas prairies--"the dry desert wastes"--from whence they had come:



***Lula (Mrs. Wm. H.) Layne
Charter Member***



***William and Lula Layne Home
Telephone Road***

We turned in at an entrance between two fan palms and passed up a lane between closely clipped cypress hedges, and came to a large white house, two stories, behind which was a smaller house, and a high white barn....a deep lawn of bermuda grass flanked the side of the house....Roses bloomed in the yard, a trellis of smilax stood by the kitchen door; a Douglas pump stood over a brick cistern; a stoneware filter sat handily on a shelf in the wood shed where a thirsty boy could open the spigot and let the cool filtered water run down his gullet.

There was a patent toilet, in which one pulled a fancy handle on a gleaming brass chain and watched the wild rush of swirling water and wondered where it went...a sink in the kitchen,...bedrooms carpeted with Chinese matting, Brussels carpet on the stairway and in the parlor,...screens of fine wire on the windows....Some grand place this....There had been nothing like...[it] back in Texas.¹⁷

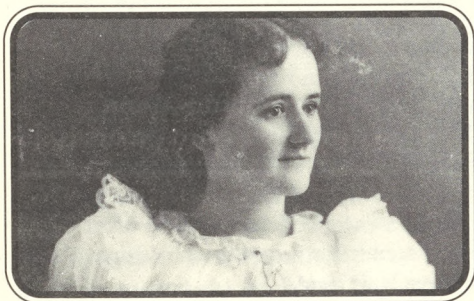
Lula's husband, William, was trustee of both the Saticoy Grammar School and the Ventura High School. He will best be remembered, however, as the pioneer of "the new era of deep well irrigation (first well, 1897) which eventually dried up the Saticoy Springs but saved the orchards."¹⁸



***Theodore and Sophia Kelsey Home
Telephone Road***

Across the road from the Goode place, with its household of rambunctious boys, lived Theodore A. and Sophia Earle Kelsey and their family of two boys and four girls--"the lovely Kelsey sisters."¹⁹ Adaline Alden Kelsey, second in age, was a founding member of the Poinsettia Club.

Theodore A. Kelsey had come to California with his father at 14 years of age from the state of Maine. The year was 1859. He attended "grammar school," now the University of California, in Oakland, then apprenticed himself to the firm of W. H. Baxter & Company, harness manufacturers, eventually overseeing the company's interests in mining (Owens Valley, California) and sugar cane (Nicaragua). Substantially before the county of Ventura was formed, T. A. joined his brother, J. B. Kelsey, in ranching ventures in the Saticoy area. He returned to Oakland in August of 1876 to claim Sophia Crocker Earle as his bride, eventually settling on "the Cline 60," located across the road from the Goode property.



***Adaline Alden Kelsey
Charter Member***

It was T. A. Kelsey who, with W. Atlee Burpee, ran the first controlled experiments with lima beans in the county.

Theodore Kelsey would show his family, gathered around the dining room table, the shoe box of beans sent him by the horticulturist Burpee, and would tend the beans with care, sending his report to Mr. Burpee.²⁰

His home place, however, was planted to walnuts by 1899. Mr. Kelsey served his community as school trustee and as preacher (ordained minister) for the Seventh Day Adventists. He and his family were members of the Saticoy Community Church as well.

The Kelsey sisters, "grey-eyed Adaline,..merry Rita,..little Inez,"²¹ and the intellectually and musically gifted Mabel, were noted for their mutual devotion, kindness and fun-loving ways. Adaline's marriage to Ernest Hawley Duval, July 7, 1909, precipitated a move to Kingsburg, California, where Ernest was principal of the local high school; she returned to active membership in the club in 1919. Her daughters, Alice Duval Underwood and Arte Duval Donlon, are active members of today's Poinsettia Club--Alice serving as historian; Arte, as club president for two terms. Granddaughter, Suzanne Underwood Saw and granddaughter-in-law, Sara Jane Underwood, have both served the club in the capacity of president as well.

Sister Rita, later Mrs. William J. Garmen, joined the club in 1900; Inez, later Mrs. Ernest Bean, in 1904. Mother Sophia became a member in 1914. Eldest sister Mabel's story is one worth the telling; valedictorian of Ventura High School's class of 1896, she graduated in 1904 from the University of California with a major in Greek and Latin. Brother Clarence elaborates in his *Down Memory Lane*:

My older sister, Mabel, was Dad's pride and joy; she did not think a person had a real education if he had not studied Latin and Greek....I was home when...Mabel left for Hawaii to marry Chester Rugg, whom she had met in college. But I was in Berkeley when we got word a couple of years later that Chester had died in a little village on the island of Kauai. We were notified that Mabel would arrive in San Francisco on a certain day but the hour of arrival was somewhat uncertain as ships did not have radio in "them days."



Sophia (Mrs. T. A.) Kelsey



Mabel Kelsey Rugg and Inez Kelsey

Mabel Rugg returned to the Kelsey family home where she resumed playing the "big square piano" for church services as she had done previously and undertook supporting herself by giving music lessons. In 1907 she was given one of the first honorary memberships in the Poinsettia Club. Following the death from tuberculosis of her younger brother, Theo, Mabel adopted his two little girls, Hope and Theodora. Again, in the words of Clarence, "They have meant joy and happiness to her ever since."²³

Lizzie A. Kimball, the eighth charter member to come into the lime-light, was married to George H. Kimball, brother of Charles N. Kimball, one of the "prominent ranchers of Saticoy."²⁴ Lizzie was born in the state of Massachusetts in August of 1860, married to George in 1882. Thirty-eight years of age on founding day, Mrs. Kimball had one child, nine-year-old Anna.

Lizzie spent a quiet eight years as a club member. She and her family moved from Saticoy to Pomona in 1907, Mrs. Kimball serving as hostess for the brief July 10th meeting of the Poinsettia Club: "It was the last time our club would be meeting with Mrs. Kimball and the rest of the afternoon was given to social intercourse." The ladies presented their departing member with "a dainty remembrance."

O. Belle Arnold, at forty-nine years of age the senior member of our founding group, was married to Abram J. Arnold, considered to be THE pioneer merchant in West Saticoy and one of the most popular. The

Arnolds, with daughter, Carrie, and son, Robert, had come to the area from Ohio in 1889, opened their store in May of that same year. Mr. Arnold doubled as postmaster, notary public and dealer in general merchandise--"best goods at the lowest cash prices"--under the sign "A. J. Arnold Grocery Store." Although the store was considered the demesne of Arnold, it was town founder William De Forest Richards who owned the building, petitioned for the post office and considered himself at home enough to loaf about the general premises:

Richards was a little wisp of a man, weighing about 100 pounds, with a full black beard rather closely trimmed, who wore boots and moved with great deliberation, which was also his manner of speech....He did not have to work...by virtue of all the land sold to the newcomers,...so either loafed at the Arnold Store or at home and tried to collect the payments due him. This latter activity became increasingly irksome as the years of the '90s went by; those who couldn't pay called him Shylock,--and those who could pay just called him Bill Richards and regarded him as a moss-back because he refused to believe that irrigation was necessary for raising crops.²⁵

Belle and her daughter, Carrie, were the first of the many mother-daughter memberships which have become tradition in the Poinsettia Club. Carrie, married to John Darling, Jr., March 25, 1896, and by founding day the mother of seven-month-old Arnold Darling, is the tenth and final charter member of the Poinsettia Club to be considered. Her membership was to be the shortest-lived. From the *Ventura Free Press* of December 1, 1899:

The death of Mrs. John Darling, Jr., of Saticoy at 2:00 a.m. Wednesday morning, cast a gloom over the entire community...Deceased was the daughter of Postmaster Arnold of Saticoy and was beloved of a wide circle of friends.

December 8, 1899:

Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Arnold and John Darling, Jr., returned home Sunday from Los Angeles after performing the sad duty of laying their loved one to rest.

One year later:

A. J. Arnold died at the home of C. M. Richardson, Ventura, December 7th, 1900 at 9:15 p.m., aged 57 years....The body was taken to Los Angeles for interment.

Belle Arnold's last year of membership in the club: 1900.²⁶

THE CLUB: The Literary Years

Notice of the formation of the Saticoy Literary and Social Club was duly given in the "West Saticoy" column of the weekly *Ventura Free Press* of June 16, 1899. One month later, the "West Saticoy" column consisted of the following, under the heading:

The Ambition to Be "Literary"

It must be owned that an ambition to become literary, when aroused in a shallow mind, often has the effect of unfitting it for probabilities of achievement, while failing to refit it for possibilities. To the superficial woman whose desire is to get into the trend of the fashion, the "paper" of the literary club becomes a delusion and a snare. It tempts to mental masquerading and plagiarism and in many cases has robbed women of needed rest and of a naturalness that is part of their charm. Having no very original thoughts of a given subject and no well-defined idea of its proper treatment, she takes the reference books, not as suggestive helps, but in the way of completion, and so unconsciously often becomes a cheat and subjects herself to intellectual demoralization.

Whatever the intention of the above, there was no discernible effect registered on our ladies. Their meetings proceeded exactly as outlined in the charter of June 14, 1899.

Proceeding in alphabetical order, the first meeting of the newly-formed club was held at the home of Belle Arnold. President Campbell called the meeting to order; roll call followed. Kipling was the author under study:

Belle Arnold?

"The blush that flies at seventeen
Is fixed at forty-nine."

- Anna Campbell? "Oh, East is East, and West is West,
and never the twain shall meet.
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at
God's great Judgment Seat."
- Agnes Clark? "I keep six honest serving men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who."
- Carrie Darling? "Daughter am I in my mother's house;
But mistress in my own."
- Jean Duval? "The silliest woman can manage a clever man;
but it takes a very clever woman to manage a fool."
- Emma Kellogg? "Being kissed by a man who didn't wax his
moustache was--like eating an egg without salt."
- Adaline Kelsey? "For the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under the skin."
- Lizzie Kimball? "Oh Adam was a gardener,
and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work
is done upon his knees."
- Lula Layne? "Many religious people are deeply suspicious. They
seem--for purely religious purposes, of course--to know
more about iniquity than the unregenerate."
- Jennie Sharp? "Never praise a sister to a sister, in the hope
of your compliments reaching the proper ears."²⁷

Lizzie Kimball then read her "most interesting paper on the life and general character of Rudyard Kipling...and his most beautiful poem 'The Recessional.' The meeting was thrown open to all and the time passed very quickly with other poems by Kipling and anecdotes concerning him."

The format of the meetings rarely varied in these early years. In the first year, 1899, subjects studied were somewhat of a potpourri: works ranged from those of Louisa May Alcott and Sir Walter Scott to Oliver Wendell Holmes. Current events--"Why Foreign Emigrants Come to this Country," "Patriotism"--were discussed as well. New member Alice Walker excited the admiration of her co-members by arriving at one meeting in style--in her sister Kate's "Stearns Wheel....It is a very neat wheel and Alice gets over the road very easily."



Alice Walker

The major emphasis in 1900, the first full year, was on poets and poetry: John Milton, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Burns, Alexander Pope, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Rudyard Kipling, Thomas Moore and John Greenleaf Whittier were studied as were novelists Louisa May Alcott and Sir Walter Scott and essayists John Dryden and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Current events consumed as great a portion of the

program as did literature: subjects ranged from such topics as "The Expansion of the American People" to "Life and Habits of the Chinese in Peking." It was this year that the study of Shakespeare was initiated as well. The ladies chose the comedy, "As You Like It," a familiar entre to the study of the Great Bard.

In April of this year, it is quite likely that a number of the ladies of the club joined other members of the Saticoy community in the journey to Los Angeles to hear Democratic presidential nominee, William Jennings Bryan. May 17 of the following year, much greater excitement was generated with the arrival in Ventura of Bryan's opponent, President William McKinley: "Saticoy was almost depopulated last Friday. Everyone who could get away went to Ventura to see President McKinley."

In 1901, the ladies joined the National Federation of Women's Clubs, watched the abandoned Presbyterian Church depart for Oxnard on five heavy wagons, and narrowed their focus to the study of literature--literature with a capital L. First came the works of the prominent

essayists of the United Kingdom and the United States, examined at a rate guaranteed to bring a poly/sci Ph.D. to his knees. Francis Bacon, Samuel Butler, John Bunyan, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke, Edward Gibbon, Charles Lamb, Daniel Webster, Thomas De Quincy, Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Macaulay, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Ruskin, and Thomas Huxley were dispatched posthaste, with the works of novelists Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Victor Hugo, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Washington Irving occasionally interjected for relief. Before year's end, two comedies, two tragedies and two histories of William Shakespeare had been satisfactorily dissected, discussed and reassembled as well. Agnes Clark added a paper on "The Women of Shakespeare"; Jeanne Duval, a paper on "The Men of Shakespeare."

In addition to journeying to Ventura to see President McKinley, the ladies as well picnicked in Aliso Canyon and, more than likely, attended the Ringling Brothers Circus in Ventura. The possibility was discussed; however, no resolution to the discussion was included in the minutes. There **was**, however, a special train which left Saticoy at 9:20 a.m. and returned at 11:35 p.m. (fare: .40) in honor of the occasion.



*The Ladies of the Club
in Informal Session*

The study of Shakespeare occupied most of 1902; five of his plays were analyzed and three auxiliary papers were borrowed from the Reciprocity Bureau to round out the picture: "The Homes of Shakespeare," "Shakespeare and His Art" and "Falstaff." Three essayists and three novelists came under the microscope as well. It was on April 9 of the year 1902 that the club voted unanimously to change the name of The Saticoy Literary and Social Club to Poinsettia Club; red and silver were adopted as club colors, replacing the blue and gold voted on the previous February. The category of "Honorary Member" was instituted this same February and in April, it was decided to designate the first meeting in

April as the annual meeting date to correspond with requirements of the Constitution of Federated Clubs which required that election of all officers be held before the 30th of May. In the latter part of the year, after some discussion, it was decided to join the Ventura County Federation of Women's Clubs.

THE CLUB: Current Events

In 1903, the study of Shakespeare continued: four more plays were examined in detail. The works of five novelists were included as well; however, changes were in the air. Noting "how pleased we are to have a law limiting the hours that children may work," the ladies, in August, chose to reorganize themselves to devote more time to current events:

There was quite a discussion as to whether we should have current events for one meeting in each month; or to give the time devoted to the paper on Authors at each meeting to current events. The latter being decided upon, each member was asked to select [a current event], or bring one for herself and one for someone else.

Was it the success of Carrie Nation in Kansas (1900) that caused our ladies to venture into the real, as opposed to the ideal, world? According to club minutes, they were consistently adamant in their support of temperance. Was it due to their efforts that, by 1903, both of the saloons of Saticoy had "closed their doors to the liquor traffic ... [continuing to be] run as temperance and cigar stands"? Or was their increasing concern with matters political a reaction to the assassination of President William McKinley in September of 1901? Whatever the reason, from this time forward, current events would occupy the major portion of the club's time. Eventually this preoccupation would manifest itself in important community involvements. Initially, however, interest extended itself to the signing of petitions, recommendations and requests, usually aimed at the national level.

One of the issues to claim the attention of the ladies through the years was the possibility of the spread of "Mormonism." In the first official current events presentation, September of 1903, the ladies voted "that our club express their disapproval of the Mormons ever getting any

power in Congress." By October of 1905, however, it became obvious that Congress was paying our ladies no heed; hence the ladies voted to add their names to "an appeal to the U. S. Senate for the removal of Mormon Senator Smoot," the appeal being generated by the *Christian Herald*. By 1916, the ladies were voicing their concern that the "war in Europe" might trigger the "growth of Mormonism."

The concern with Mormonism was a natural outgrowth of the overall concern members felt for the position of women in society. It was one which, in the opinion of the ladies, could stand improvement. In spite of President Grover Cleveland's admonition in 1910--

Sensible and responsible women do not want to vote. The relative positions to be assumed by man and woman in the working out of our civilization were assigned long ago by a higher intelligence--

the ladies, in September of 1911, invited the "Chairman of the Suffrage League" to present her views to the group. Her paper, "Equal Rights," was enthusiastically received as was a club member's offering, "Is Women's Suffrage Important?" It was a topic, reported Secretary Hawley, to which "closest attention was given." In February of 1916, "The Feminist Movement" was the topic of an afternoon "which brought out discussion on the work of women after middle life." In June of 1918, club members voted unanimously to "endorse the ratification by the State Legislature of the Federal amendment on the Susan B. Anthony Amendment if passed by Congress."

Although California Governor Hiram Johnson's sweeping reforms had given the vote to our ladies in 1911, it was not until August 26, 1920, that the 36th state, Tennessee, voted the 19th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution into existence. Our ladies were then able to relax their vigilance and, in concert with all their sisters, vote in the presidential election set for the Fall of that same year.

If ever an appeal would gather support from the ladies, one dealing with the status of women, children or minority groups would do so. In 1904, "it was moved and carried that the club sign a petition to congress requesting that land be given individually to landless Indians of Northern California." In 1905, it was decided to endorse a petition "in regard to having women physicians in hospitals where women and children are

treated." In 1907, a petition was sent to the state legislature requesting "aid to consumptives," later in the same year, "equal property rights for women." In 1917, endorsements were sent for the passage of bills relating to "state aid for children of persons committed to a county tuberculosis hospital" and "the National Reform Association relating to the reading of the Bible in the schools." In 1919, the ladies endorsed measures relating to the Community Property Law, an Industrial Farm Home for Delinquent Women and an increase in the elementary School Fund.

Throughout the years, subjects chosen for study echoed the same concern; for example, in 1905, "Child Labor Laws in Various States"; 1909, "California Laws Regarding Women & Children"; 1907, "Women Wage Earners"; 1910, "Opinions of Factory Girls Regarding Home & Marriage"; 1915, "Conditions of Women & Children in the U.S."; 1920, "Women in Industry," "Child Welfare, Health & Education"; 1923: "Child Welfare" and "Making Children Worth While." Women short story writers, artists and novelists were studied as were the problems of lady monarchs, "Famous Old Women," and "girls whose friends failed to meet them at the [railroad] station."

"Miss Barstow, Girl Violin Maker," was the subject of study in 1905; "An English Lady's Progress in Electrical Studies," in 1907. By 1910, the ladies felt themselves competent to enter into dialogue regarding their own opinions of the "progressive women of the century." The discussion generated some heat, some light, and concluded much as a similar discussion would today.

Mrs. Clark gave many points with regard to woman's gain in entering the business world. Mrs. Wason thought home was the place for the woman....[However, in conclusion], the prevailing opinion seemed to be that women gained by entering business.

One of the more interesting topics relating to women was introduced in November of 1916; the topic, "The Other Woman."

We all wanted to help the other woman but did not know just how to approach her in a way that would be acceptable. It was suggested that something could be done through the Parent Teachers Association. We all wished we could have an organization of this kind in our neighborhood.

THE CLUB: Involvement

One organization the ladies **did** have in the neighborhood and which received their full support was the Big Sisters' League, a philanthropic group organized "to help children of prostitutes and arrested streetwalkers."²⁸ Home for these children was the Blaylock's cottage on Ventura Avenue:

In early December the Club was invited to visit the League's home on the Ventura Avenue. The Sisters showed us through the house and it surely had the appearance of a well-kept home. The 18 little ones seemed as happy as could be.

Gifts of clothing ("four little dresses,...four pairs of bloomers and a dozen diapers"), bedding ("three little crib quilts") and food, were sent at holiday time during the years the shelter was in operation. Generous gifts of money, collected at benefits arranged for the purpose, were sent throughout the year on request.

The Ventura School for Girls, a state-operated reform school, also located on Ventura Avenue, also received the help of the Poinsettia ladies as did the Maternity Cottage in Los Angeles. "Needy and worthy women students" of the University of California at Berkeley received support for their University Clubhouse from 1905 until 1913 when, the club secretary happily reported, "There will be no more assessments as the Club is self-supporting."

Another example of meeting the needs of those less fortunate, following the great San Francisco earthquake, April 18, 1906: Registered nurse Adaline Kelsey rushed off immediately "so as to assist in caring for the sick and wounded." Addie's first stop was undoubtedly Children's Hospital, 3100 California Street, where little sister, Inez, was completing her nurses training. Brother Clarence Earle Kelsey, who was working for a survey crew in the hills above Merced Falls, tells of his search for Inez:

When I arrived at Berkeley,...the Call Building, the tallest in San Francisco at that time, was still burning like a tall torch....It was almost impossible to get into the still burning city;...[I was] dropped at Van Ness Ave. (still burning), and I walked two or three miles to the hospital where I found that

they had plenty of water and were not much damaged by the quake.²⁹

Accompanying Addie in spirit, the ladies set about immediately arranging "an entertainment on the 27th, proceeds to go to the earthquake victims." As reported by the *Ventura Free Press*:

Saticoy comes to the front and sends a whole carload of provisions and clothing to the stricken city sufferers...including 200 dozen boiled eggs and 200 loaves of bread....The community also collected \$1,300 in donations which will be shipped by express mail.

During the afternoon readings, the ladies "sewed on children's garments to be given to the needy in San Francisco" as well.

The ladies **did** choose to help finance a marble monument to commemorate the grave of California's first Anglo teacher and Santa Paula resident, Olive Mann Isbell. They **did not** choose to assist in placing a picture, "symbolic of California and Italy," in the International College of Agriculture in Rome, Italy, February, 1908. Nor did they choose to support The American Committee for the Independence of Armenia in its attempt to "put an end to Turkish rule over Christians" in November of 1922.

Ongoing was the effort "to do all we can to make ourselves intelligent citizens," both before and after women were given the vote in California (1911). The frustration of those who are informed but impotent was obvious in the early years. By February of 1914, however, the ladies were relaxed enough to conclude their discussion regarding "the problem of tolls" for the Panama Canal as follows: "Since the statesmen in Washington do not seem to know just what to do about the matter, we did not attempt to settle the question."

Candidates for political office were scrutinized and issues examined. Judge Rogers, in the Fall of 1914, was engaged to address club members on the subject of Amendments to the Constitution. In 1922, Mr. Davis of the Taxpayers League addressed the ladies; in September, Judge Drapeau spoke to the ladies and guests" on the 30 measures that will be coming before us on the Nov. 7th election."

Questions of world peace they clearly admitted beyond their province; however, they kept themselves informed, exploring such subjects as "Naval Waste," "Peace Day," "The Comparative Expenditures of Several Nation's War Preparations," "The Delusion of Militarism" "Heroes of Peace" and "International Conciliation." (If there were a hawk in the group, she kept a low profile.)

The first time the club "was honored with the presence of a gentleman" (Mr. Hogue) was in February of 1912. The subject of "men" did arise, however infrequently or inauspiciously. For example, the delegate sent to the "convention at Santa Monica" in April of 1917 reported: "...a woman at that meeting thought in these busy times, the men ought to do something useful like knitting instead of playing with horseshoes."

THE CLUB AND THE COMMUNITY

When it came to "good works" in and for the community of Saticoy, there were numerous instances of affirmative action developing from the germ of a concept. In the first year of the club's existence, 1899, Addie Kelsey presented her paper "Why Foreign Emigrants Came To This Country." In 1904, the ladies investigated "Laws Restricting Chinese from Coming to this Country"; 1908 "Emigration from Italy," "The Immigrants at Ellis Island," "What is Being Done to Teach Immigrants Something About our Country" and "The Return of Sick Immigrants."

By 1915, the ladies decided to participate in a state-level program, trying to determine "what is being done for the immigrant" in California. In concert with a study of "Mexico and the Mexicans," "Wilson's Mexican Policy," "Education and Religion in Mexico," Mesdames Clark, Graham and Kilson "were chosen...to see what could be done for the poorer Mexican in our midst." January of 1916, Mrs. Clark "reported what she had learned about night schools for the immigrants...our state is comparatively new and little information is available at present time." In March of the same year, Mrs. Clark reported on her progress with a location for a night school in Saticoy: "...we could have the lower school building for the use of the adult Mexicans, provided they wish to come."

The **first** germ of a concept to bear fruit for the benefit of the locals developed as naturally. Books, it must be obvious, were central to the

club's existence. The first club expenditure, August of 1900, was for books. Soon a lending system developed; shelves were required. By 1906, the Reverend Mr. Snell, minister of the Methodist Church in West Saticoy, agreed to house the burgeoning library. (This was after, as Secretary Hawley noted, "objectional books, if any," were removed.) By 1912, the collection was large enough to warrant sharing with the community; the possibility of establishing a branch of the county library in Saticoy was investigated from all angles. By 1916, after periodic skirmishes with the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, the ladies came to the conclusion that no money would be forthcoming. Acting unilaterally, they found a central (and free) space to house the collection: the Saticoy School building. Librarian Howard, however, announced that she was not willing to "take charge" without benefit of salary.

The library limped along with volunteer help, moving to "Mr. Logan's store" during the summer months until October 1916, when the ladies voted to award Miss Tucker the sum of six dollars a month until such time as county money would be available. In January of 1917 the county finally capitulated. When the Saticoy Branch of the Ventura County Public Library has been established for one full year, they said, the county would be willing to assume responsibility for a "custodian to oversee the collection." Well done, ladies!

In 1911, Miss Rich, a teacher from Santa Barbara, was invited to address the club on the subject of "Sloyd," a Swedish system of manual training in woodworking then popular. Miss Rich agreed, provided her carfare be paid. By mid-March, 1912, the ladies had introduced the system into the Saticoy School, agreeing to underwrite the initial costs for equipment as well as two-and-one-half month's salary for the teacher. The grounds of Saticoy School were greatly improved through the efforts of the ladies; a "milk fund" was established for the students at the "lower school" (East Saticoy), as well.

In 1913, a "guest speaker...from Los Angeles" addressed the ladies on the subject of "cleaning up and beautifying a town." After checking with the Saticoy Board of Trade, the ladies contacted the officialdom of the Southern Pacific Railroad, secured their permission to "make a park," as well as their agreement to "send [their] gardener...and furnish plants," and "decided to arrange to borrow \$100 to put the park in order." Club refreshments were discontinued; the hostess contributed to the

fund instead. After two years of cooked food sales, rummage sales, individual donations, plot renovations, plant consultations, and cement conferences, the park was done and paid for; total cost: \$302.74.

Club ladies and their husbands and the Board of Trade and their wives met at the home of Mrs. Sharp. [Following dinner], Mrs. Sharp burned the notes; then,...in a neat little speech presented the Park to the Board of Trade.

Mr. Darling accepted the gift. He and "other members of the Board made short addresses." All declared themselves "quite hopeful for the future of Saticoy."

THE CLUB: Diverse Subjects

It is important to note, at this point, that the original aim of the Poinsettia Club--that of "mutual improvement and sociability"--remained the primary goal during the years of evolution. The conception of "improvement," however, was altered in concert with the changing times. The classics were not abandoned altogether; however, they appear only infrequently on the reading lists. California authors: Jack London, Gertrude Atherton, Stuart Edward White, Joaquin Miller, Bret Harte, Mary Austin were studied assiduously as were those authors who occasionally used California as setting: Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Bell Howell.

Popular authors from other regions of the United States proved popular: "muckrakers" Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffans, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Lew Wallace, Hamlin Garland, George Washington Cable, Patricio Lafcadio Tessima Carlos Hearn.

Art and artists--Italian, French, English, and American (emphasis: Californian)--were favorite subjects. The study of Home Economics occurred periodically; the study of Astronomy occupied much of 1921 (evening meetings became *de rigueur* during this period so that the ladies could stargaze). Conservation measures were studied, encouraged and lobbied, prompting, in February of 1914 "a card from the Forestry Department asking what we have done in this line of work."

The first of the most successful "magazine meetings" was held in May

of 1908; from that time forward, *The Bay View Magazine*, *National Geographic*, *The Clubwoman*, *The Mentor* and *The Literary Digest* would feature largely in the lives of our ladies. Articles ranged from "Causes of the Present Condition of Panic on Wall Street" and "Essentials of Parliamentary Law" to "Good Effects of Laughter" and "Telephones in the Forest of Maine." Particularly popular were "how to" articles, some of more immediate value than others: "Uses of the Telephone," "Uses of Arsenic," "Ostrich Farming in Arizona," "How to Train a Flea," "How Dogs are Trained for Red Cross Service by the Italians," and "The Care and Feeding of a Boa Constrictor."

Roll Call was changed periodically, from the usual custom of quoting authors, to reflect the changing areas of interest: In May of 1908, "quotations were given from laws governing the Juvenile Court"; February, 1911, "roll call was responded to by quotations from the Presidents"; March, 1911, each member responded with "My Special Enthusiasm"; December, 1911, favorite recipes were given; February, 1915, roll call consisted of "the giving of Valentines"; April of 1915: "It was agreed we suspend the rule relating to giving quotations at roll call." May, 1916: During roll call we learned "that alcohol has been made from sawdust;...Pearl Harbor will have the most powerful wireless station known;...the skin of the white whale is used for making shoes and gloves." June, 1917: During roll call "we learned that Hoover favors using grains for food and not for liquor during the war." November, 1922: During roll call one of "the most pleasing events named was the financial success of the Rummage Sale--\$200 cleared."

There were few club meetings that did not feature music in one fashion or another. Mabel Rugg was well equipped to lecture on the subject; she was also well equipped to play and to sing. It was she who most often directed "entertainments" in which club members participated or observed. Jeanne Bell Duval possessed a lovely voice as did Jennie Sharp. Both frequently added a musical complement to the subject under study. **Serious** study included the lives and works of Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Strauss, etc., various American composers and opera, light and otherwise. The "teleharmonium" was investigated as were "The Good Effects of Music on the Sick," "The Beginning and Growth of the Phonograph," "Some Old Songs that Delight the Heart," and all aspects of the new phenomenon, "ragtime." In November of 1919 a

program of "Canned Music" was described as "one of the pleasantest of the year." The production of "Omelet and Oatmelia," a musical recitation starring Mrs. Procter and Mrs. Raines, received rave notices in June of 1921.

Fortunate club members regaled the stay-at-homes with tales of trips to the St. Louis Exposition in 1904; to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, in 1915 ("the grandest Exposition that the world has ever seen," claimed Mesdames Clark, Sharp, Tucker and Dyer); Aliso Canyon, Foster Park, Seaside Park were the settings for picnic outings; the Jones and Armour gardens in Santa Barbara were visited *en masse* following months of investigation into the finer intricacies of the art of horticulture. The ladies exchanged visits as well with members of the Santa Paula Ebell Club, Briggs I. N. S. Club (founded 1900), Current Events Club of Santa Paula, the Avenue Ladies Club (1892); the Wednesday Afternoon Club of Mound (1894), Oxnard Monday Club (1905); County Federation; District Federation; State Federation.

There was a customary two-month hiatus during the summer months, "all gone camping" being the usual notation. The most popular camping spot was the Hueneme Beach, transformed into tent city during the dog days. Also popular were Foster Park and the mouth of the Ventura River. Otherwise, meetings were cancelled only on the deaths of local celebrities, when they infringed on family holiday time and during periods of community indisposition, such as the devastating Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918. Inclement weather was seldom the cause of cancellation, as all the ladies lived on the "right side of the river."³⁰

And how do we know the above? Largely through the efforts of one Anna C. Hawley, club secretary from 1904 to 1929. Anna, a native of Ireland, attended State Normal School with James and Susanna Sharp. She and husband Oscar, "with their handsome sons,"³¹ Clarence and Lee, made their home with the Sharps on their arrival in Saticoy, while building their home on the property adjacent to Anna's old friends. A teacher in Saticoy's Live Oak School, Anna was remembered well by student Grace Sharp.

By the time I reached the last grade a very primitive course in physiology had been added, and I well remember the day when

Mrs. Anna C. Hawley, who was then teaching the school, called me up in front and said, "Tell me very quietly about the pelvic bones."³²

Indeed, Mrs. Hawley might well claim some credit for Grace's career in medicine. The year Grace was to graduate from Live Oak School, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors somehow neglected to send the necessary exams for this one graduate the school had to offer. Mrs. Hawley called the board in indignation; Grace was allowed to sit for the Primary Teachers Exam, passed it with flying colors--thence on to Santa Paula High and Cooper Medical College.

The minutes of Anna Hawley were written "with loving sensitivity," great attention to detail and sprinkled with philosophical musings about whatever subject happened to be under study. Some samples follow: on "Women's Suffrage" (1910): "We of comfortable homes, protected and cared for, cannot judge what the right of suffrage would mean to women who have to toil in sweat shops and other places for a living, perhaps toiling for a mere pittance." On "Dust and its Dangers" (1915): "It seems almost miraculous that we have lived so long with the world so full of death dealing things." On "Customs of the Elizabethan Age" (1916): "They did many strange things in that period, but then, that was 300 years ago." On "France" (1918): "The Club ladies showed much interest in this country which is now fighting so bravely to hold back the invaders." On "Motion Pictures" (1920): "If the pictures were of a clean, high grade, these exhibitions would be a liberal education to the public as well as a source of pleasure."



Anna (Mrs. Oscar) Hawley

In recognition of her years of extraordinary service, the Poinsettia Club awarded Mrs. Hawley the status of Honorary Member in the year 1920.

Four generations of her family have enjoyed membership in the club: Anna, herself; second generation: Miriam Hawley; third: Inez Hawley and Louise Mellon; fourth, Sally Thomsen.

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Early in 1924, the ladies initiated preparations for their 25th anniversary celebration. "Mrs. Schneider, Mrs. Duval and...Mrs. Tucker were appointed to attend to the business." Membership, in the intervening years, had grown from ten to fifteen active and seven honorary members. Dues had increased as well: from 25 cents per person per year (1899) through \$1 per person per year (1912) to \$1.50 per person per year (1915). Charter member Adaline Kelsey Duval, having returned to active membership in 1919, hosted the celebration. Charter member Jennie Sharp Guthrie, a returnee in 1922, was present as well. Charter member Agnes Clark could claim the longest uninterrupted membership; Ida (Mrs. John) Dickenson, the first "new" member admitted to the club (1900), ran a close second. Anna Hawley, still faithfully recording the minutes, had accumulated 22 year of membership; Susanna Sharp, 21 years. Belle (Mrs. John) Walker, mother of Alice and Kate, claimed 20 years. Also on the active list: Mesdames Darling, Dyer, Gardner, Nichols, Rea, Schneider, Tobias and Tucker.



Ida (Mrs. John) Dickenson



Belle (Mrs. John) Walker

The community of Saticoy had grown as well, from a population of 800 in 1899 to 1,250 in 1924. The telephone line from Santa Barbara to Los Angeles had been strung through town in 1903; electricity had become generally available in 1906 at the rate of \$1.25/month; radios, by 1924, were no longer novelties but were proliferating throughout the county. Adventures and misadventures with the automobile were duly reported in the "West Saticoy" column of the *Ventura Free Press* until 1915

when, it was reported, "nearly every farmer has a car"; "tractor machinery" was predicted to soon replace the draft horse on the farm. The annual damages inflicted by Jupiter Pluvius occupied headlines until April of 1912 and the opening of the long-awaited bridge across the Santa Clara River. Saticoy was no longer an isolated community.

With this loss of isolation came an inevitable loss of innocence--in Saticoy, as in the whole of the United States. Women had won the vote: the Allies had won the war to end all wars. However, foreigners were looked on with suspicion; the "trial by atmosphere" of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in 1921 horrified responsible citizens; the first of the laws restricting immigration was put into effect in May of 1924.

Prohibition had been voted into effect nationwide in January of 1920 yet there was an increase in alcoholism at all levels of society. In August of 1923, genial President Harding died under "mysterious" circumstances as the scandals surrounding his administration erupted into the headlines. His vice president, the taciturn Calvin Coolidge, was above suspicion. He was not, however, a Teddy Roosevelt, nor were his times the insouciant turn-of-the-century never-to-come-again golden years of America.

Today, there are approximately 8,000 people living in the Saticoy area. The ladies of the Poinsettia Club, now the Saticoy Poinsettia Club, number 36 active, 17 associate and three honorary members. Meetings are still held twice monthly, the General Meeting scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month; Craft and Book Section, the third Wednesday of each month. Quotations are no longer given at roll call; they are, however, included in the program booklet, appropriate to the program under study.

Further refinements: "good works" are formalized under the two committees: Scholarship and Community Services. Membership is handled by committee as well, as are Programs and Hospitality. The Treasurer is assisted by an Auditor. In addition, there are the appointive offices of Parliamentarian, Historian and Section Coordinator. As in 1899, today's Poinsettia Club is forward-looking. What is even more important, however, is that today's members intend never to lose sight of what has gone before. Traditional values of a simpler time are cherished; idealized ethics reflect those days when issues were black and

white--before gray became the norm. The line of transmission is direct: from grandmother through mother to daughters and daughters-in-law.

The philosophy of today's ladies--inherited from yesterday, to be passed on to tomorrow--is accurately reflected in the following collect, recited at each meeting:

Keep us, oh God, from pettiness;
let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.
Let us be done with fault-finding
and leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretense
and meet each other face to face,
without self-pity and without prejudice.

Let us take time for all things;
make us to grow calm, serene, gentle.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses,
straightforward and unafraid.

Grant that we may realize it is the little things
that create differences;
that in the big things of life we are at one.

May we strive to touch and know
the great, common, human heart of us all.

And, oh Lord God, let us forget not
to be kind.

NOTES

(Quotations from Poinsettia Club minutes are not annotated.)

1. *Ventura Free Press*, "Saticoy & West Saticoy," October 6, 1899.

2. *Ibid.*

3. The Saticoy Regulators enjoyed a rather lurid reputation, promulgated mainly by its members, as a "mean lot" of hombres, dedicated to cleaning up "the cattle rustling and horse stealing that went on in those days," by the most effective means at hand. The implication was ever that "lynch" was the law that prevailed. The only lynchings that occurred in Ventura County, however, occurred substantially before the "Regulators" came into existence. Thieves must have believed their tales for, by the time of our ladies' entrance into the literary scene, the operations of horse thieves in the Saticoy area had been substantially curtailed. (See *VCHS QUARTERLY*, Vol. II, No.4.)

4. Layne, William Robert. "Saticoy Days," (unpublished manuscript, ca. 1932, p. 4.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

8. Eugene Kimball as quoted by Arte Duval Donlon, "....And See All the People," Saticoy, 1965, p. 6.

9. "A graduate in medicine,...shall present his diploma to one of the Boards of Examiners herein named, for verification as to its genuineness. If the diploma is found genuine, and if the person named therein be the person claiming and presenting the same, the Board of Examiners shall issue its certificate to that effect, signed by all the members thereof, and such diploma and certificate shall be conclusive as to the right of the lawful holder of the same to practice medicine in this state." (Approved April 3, 1876.)

10. Thille, Grace Sharp. *Yesterday*, Santa Paula, California, 1958, pp. 47-48.

11. Catlin, Esther W. "A History of the Saticoy Community Church," Saticoy, 1965, p. 5.

12. Grace's mid-life marriage to John Thille did not curtail her philanthropies. She and her husband were extremely generous to the community they loved. The founding gift for the establishment of the hospital in Santa Paula, according to the *Ventura Star-Free Press* the largest donation up to that time made in Ventura County for any endeavor, came from the Thilles. The land for Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Saticoy also was a gift from the Thilles. Substantial donations were made as well to Crippled Childrens Society, St. Joseph's Convalescent Home, Villanova Preparatory School and The Ventura County Symphony. The land for the Ventura County Government Center was purchased from the Thilles; the price was so low and the harvests so great during the ten

year interval before construction, that the land was virtually a gift.

13. Layne, "Saticoy Days," p. 5.
14. Ventura *Free Press*, October 6, 1899.
15. Layne, "Saticoy Days," p. 7.
16. Donlon, Arte Duval. "One Kind of Meeting," p. 9.
17. Layne, "Saticoy Days," p. 2.
18. See Layne, William R. "We Dugged a Well at Saticoy," (unpublished manuscript), ca. 1932.
9. Donlon, "Meeting," p. 9.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
22. Kelsey, Clarence Earle. *Down Memory Lane*, Santa Paula, California, 1960, p. 17.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
24. Ventura *Free Press*, October 6, 1899.
25. Layne, "Saticoy Days," p. 5.
26. A tragic footnote to a tragic tale: Young widower John Darling, Jr., a carpenter by trade, after some years moved to San Luis Obispo with little Arnold. There he met and married a local girl. After one year of marriage, thirty-three-year-old John Darling returned to Ventura to die in his father's home in Saticoy of cancer of the bowel.
27. These responses to roll call are accurate quotations from Kipling; responses were not included in the minutes; however, these simulations are indications of how the ladies might have responded, as indicated in the charter.
28. Ventura *Star-Free Press*, May 16, 1971.
29. Kelsey, p. 17.
30. Club legend has it that one very active member of the Saticoy Community Church felt hurt that she had not been asked to join the Poinsettia Club. The pastor explained that she need not take it personally--she just lived on the "wrong side of the river." The first club member from "across the Santa Clara" was Betty Powell who joined the club ca. 1972.
31. Donlon, "Meeting," p. 9.
32. Thille, p. 14.

Additional Sources Consulted:

- Bliss, Mary. "A History of Poinsettia Club, Saticoy, California, 1889-1984," (VCHM Docent paper, 1984).
- Federal Census, 1880, 1900, 1910.
- Sharp, James Meikle. *Early Recollections*, 1931.
- Thille, Grace Sharp. *Day Before Yesterday*. Santa Paula, California, 1952.

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mrs. Stewart M. Angus
Avenue Hardware
Bank of A. Levy
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Bank
Mrs. Philip Bard
Mr. & Mrs. R. V. Barker
Michael & Joan Barnard
Mr. & Mrs. Ray G. Barnard
Mavis Barnhill
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph "Hoot" Bennett
Mr. James H. Boatner
Mr. & Mrs. John W. Borchard
Mr. & Mrs. Milton C. Borchard
James L. & Martha J. Brock
Mr. & Mrs. Cullins Brown
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas W.
Burhoe, Jr.
Mrs. Reginald Burnham
Edwin L. Carty
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Clark II
Mary A. Cohen
Mary Ann Cohen
Marla Dailey
M. F. Daily Investment Co.
Mrs. W. Thomas Davis
Del Norte Foods, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Diedrich
Mr. & Mrs. Milton Diedrich
Mrs. Margaret P. Donlon
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Mr. & Mrs. Donald D. Dufau
Jane E. Duncan
Mr. & Mrs. Paul A. Eastwood
Economy Plumbing, Inc.
Wilhelm S. & Geneva Everett
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Mrs. Pauline S. Fourt
Dr. William J. Fox
Marjorie A. Fraser
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R. W. Fulkerson Hardware
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Getty Oil Company
Herbert C. Gould
Mr. & Mrs. Lee M. Griswold
Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Grosfield
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Hambleton, Jr.
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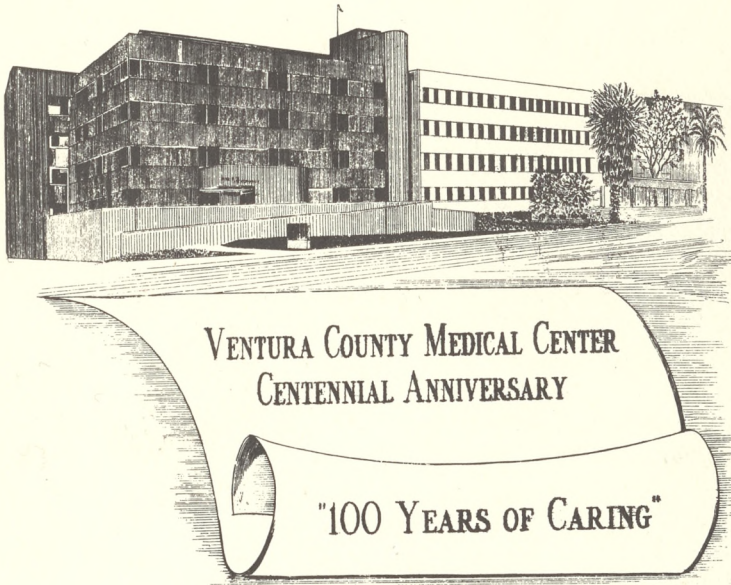
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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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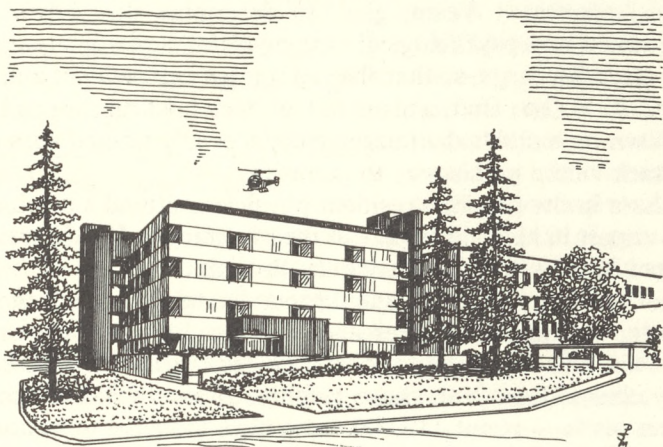
Photographs from the Helen Boyd collection include Mrs. Boyd's captions, based on information she gathered from the files of Lloyd Freeman, for many years Director of Maintenance at VCMC.

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VENTURA COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER CENTENNIAL CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF CARING

By Michael Briley



Ventura, 1987:

The helicopter hovers like a huge hummingbird over the four-story building and sets down gently on the rooftop heliport. The big bird's doors fly open and out jump two men, who gingerly lift a multiple-injury victim onto a stretcher. They place the patient on a gurney, rush him to a waiting elevator and descend to the ground floor in seconds. There an emergency-trauma team, previously alerted, waits ready to go to work to save the victim's life.

This is the Emergency Department of the Ventura County Medical Center. It's a state-of-the-art facility staffed by specially-trained doctors and nurses who are ready to step in at a moment's notice 24 hours a day with lifesaving care. They do a great deal of that: last year, VCMC's Emergency Department, the most active in the county, recorded more than 48,000 patient visits. VCMC's Emergency Department works closely with the County Search and Rescue team, the only one of its kind in the nation staffed by doctors and nurses and is the base station for paramedic services in Ventura and the Ojai Valley.

Three floors above the Emergency Department, the lives of the tiny premature infants and critically ill newborns are being saved in the only

Newborn Intensive Care Nursery on the Central Coast. In another unit on the same floor, a woman whose high-risk prenatal problems have been cared for in VCMC's Women's Health Center and followed in its High Risk Pregnancy Program gives birth to a healthy baby in an uncomplicated delivery.

In a third-floor Medical-Surgical unit, an elderly woman soon to be discharged from the hospital is visited by members of the Medical Center's Geriatric Assessment Team; goal: to determine this lady's physical, medical, social and psychological care needs and coordinate delivery of services after discharge, so that she can remain independent and at home.

In the Critical Care Unit, a blend of high-tech medical care and monitoring, with warm, individual attention from specially trained nurses helps a heart attack victim on his way to recovery.

Elsewhere in the hospital, resident physicians attend a seminar taught by a top expert in his field as part of their training in VCMC's nationally-recognized Family Practice Residency Program.

In other buildings on the hospital grounds and at various sites around the county, patients of all ages and walks of life receive treatment in VCMC's network of general medical clinics, Family Care Centers and specialty clinics. Last year, these facilities recorded more than 112,000 outpatient visits — about 110,000 more than the total population of the City of San Buenaventura when VCMC had its somewhat modest beginning as County Hospital over 100 years ago.

Ventura, 1887:

Population about 2,000. Haircuts for a quarter, porterhouse steak twelve cents a pound, deluxe restaurant meals for under half a dollar. Four-room cottages rented for \$25 a month and you could buy your own home on an acre of land for \$500.

New stores, banks, hotels and other businesses were sprouting like weeds along the Main Street. The new railroad link-up with points north and south was the talk of the town and consumed column after column of "booster" copy in the Ventura Free Press. With the infusion of new people and new money, and plentiful oil reserves, the greening of Ventura County was well under way. In 1887, the City of San Buenaventura was a boom town populated by boomers, full of hope and big dreams.

But the picture was not nearly so bright in terms of the citizenry's health and health care. All too often, people relied on do-it-yourself care with patent medicines hawked in print and in person by a never-ending procession of "snake oil" salesmen. Mexican Mustang Liniment, "... for

man and beast... cures sciatica, lumbago, piles, strains, sprains, scratches, bites, bruises, corns and sores," apparently was a popular item as

FOR

Man and Beast.

Mustang Liniment is older than most men, and used more and more every year.

Ventura Free Press, August 7, 1885

were DeHaven's Dyspepsia Destroyer, Simmons' Liver Regulator, and Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets. Interestingly, large advertisements for such potions — which were often liberally laced with alcohol — ran frequently on the newspaper pages adjacent to stories expounding the virtues of the temperance movement.

Childbirth in less than desirable conditions and a lack of prenatal care contributed to a high infant mortality rate. As the far-flung county population grew, injuries from farm and industrial accidents were increasing. In the 1870s and 1880s, care for the sick and injured was uneven, despite the dedicated efforts of Dr. Cephas L. Bard, (the County Physician, his predecessors, and his relatively few colleagues in town.



SICK HEADACHE,

Bilious Headache, Dizziness, Constipation, Indigestion, Bilious Attacks, and all derangements of the stomach and bowels, are promptly relieved and permanently cured by the use of

DR. PIERCE'S PELLETS.

Purely Vegetable and Perfectly Harmless.

As a LIVER PILL, Unequaled!

ONE PELLET A DOSE! SMALLEST, CHEAPEST, EASIEST TO TAKE.

The Young Republican, May 1, 1890

Acute care was given at home or in the homes of others who charged a monthly fee.

As in other cities and towns across the nation, infectious diseases — typhoid, tuberculosis, "valley fever" and anthrax — were exacting a toll in death and disability.

Smallpox was no small concern, as repeated news stories in the *Ventura Free Press* in early 1887 attest. In April, Dr. Bard made a report to the

public from the newly-created Board of Health regarding the ongoing quarantine of a west Main Street house occupied by two smallpox victims:

... After removal of the quarantine, the infected house will be fumigated, disinfected, and will remain unoccupied, but under guard, for at least one month. If any new cases should occur during that time, the house will again be appropriated as a pesthouse. If, however, the attention of the Board is not called to any new cases, it is proposed to buy the house; if sufficient funds can be raised by subscription, and by burning it to the ground, to effectually stamp out this evil which has so seriously threatened, for a time at least, the prosperity of our town and county...¹

The local smallpox outbreak helped spur authorities on to build a hospital. On the same page of the April 8, 1887 *Free Press* that carried Dr. Bard's report from the Board of Health, it was reported that County Supervisors received three bids for the construction of County Hospital. Supervisors accepted the lowest and best bid of \$4,530 from John Hund and C.R. Horn, who were ordered to complete the building by July 5. In several ways this authorization to build a County Hospital was the culmination of longstanding County efforts to deal with an issue as important then as it is today — care of the indigent sick.

Local public involvement in health care began long before the first nail was hammered in the construction of County Hospital. Even before the Legislature mandated the formation of Ventura County, separating it from Santa Barbara County in 1873, a local Hospital Fund defrayed costs of caring for the indigent sick. Several of the early items on the new Ventura Board of Supervisors' agendas in 1873 were health-related. In April, S.P. Guiberson, M.D. was appointed County Physician "at a salary not to exceed \$250 per annum." Dr. Guiberson was almost immediately authorized "to advertise for sealed proposals for taking care of the county indigent sick..." Hospital Fund expenditures in August were approved for such items as surgical instruments and mattresses. The largest expenditures, however, were payments to individuals for the board and care of indigent sick in their homes, with medical ministrations in the hands of the County Physicians. That arrangement would continue throughout the years prior to the construction of County Hospital in 1887.

In the early years, Supervisors' minutes show approved payments to several persons for board and care of the indigent sick. Even during those years, the name to appear most consistently was that of Mrs. Isabel Jane Hobson, the wife of William Dewey Hobson. W.D. Hobson was a contrac-

tor, officeholder and civic activist who earned the accolade "Father of Ventura County" in recognition of his lobbying for the bill that created the County. Even a casual reading of the records suggests that Mrs. Hobson was as busy as her husband, if not more so.

For many years, Mrs. Hobson operated the Star Restaurant and Boarding House on the east side of Oak Street between Santa Clara and Main, a



(VCHM)

*Isabel Jane Hobson,
Proprietress of the First
(Unofficial) County
Hospital*

few doors north of what is now the Goodwill Industries store. Clearly, Mrs. Hobson took care of the majority of the indigent sick over the decade and a half prior to the building of County Hospital. By 1882, Supervisors' minutes noted: "Mrs. Hobson's being the *only* bid for providing for patients in the County Hospital, it was accepted at \$4.50 per week for each patient."² This reference to "the County Hospital" five years before one was built seems to suggest that Mrs. Hobson's Boarding House was considered the County Hospital — unofficially and informally at least — in the early 1880s. There are repeated references to "the County Hospital" before 1887 both in the newspapers and Supervisors' minutes, but apparently there was no founding or official designation of any place as a County Hospital prior to that year.

In the minds of many civic leaders, private boarding and care of the indigent sick had been increasingly regarded as a temporary measure at best. As early as 1875, Grand Jurors, in their annual report, said they "would most respectfully recommend to the Honorable Board of Super-

visors that a place be procured for the purpose of taking care of the county poor and indigent sick, and would suggest that a suitable farm be purchased for that purpose. . . ."³

There were some short-lived ideas and false starts toward establishing a hospital over the years. In February, 1876, Supervisors called for proposals for the sale to the County of lands suitable for hospital purposes.⁴ For whatever reason, that solicitation seems to have come to naught. In December, 1878, the Supervisors appointed a committee to confer with the officials of the City of San Buenaventura about the possibility of the County leasing the Town Plaza for use as a hospital farm. The committee reported back to the Board the next February. Their report, "submitting certain written propositions from the Town Council," was received and filed,⁵ apparently into oblivion.

Meanwhile, County Supervisors over the years arranged for support payments not only for the "indigent sick," but for the "dependent poor," out of the Hospital Fund, often taken up on a case-by-case basis by the Board. An early example, in 1875, was the matter of the maintenance of one R.F. Babb "a dependent poor man" who was to be paid \$10 per month "through the hands of the County Physician. . . ."⁶ A few months previously, the Board had set forth criteria for persons to be received under County charge as indigent sick or dependent poor. The Hospital Fund, which supported these and other health-related expenditures, was based on a Hospital tax rate that averaged between .04 and .06 during the 1870s and 1880s.

Cephas Little Bard, M.D. was the pre-eminent medical man of his time, indeed the pioneer physician of Ventura County. Certainly he was the



Cephas Little Bard, M.D., and Count

(VCHM)

best-trained, and throughout his career not only kept up with medical advances, but indeed through research and clinical work, contributed to medical progress. A skilled surgeon, he devised surgical techniques as the needs arose. Something of a Renaissance man, Dr. Bard was a writer, an inventor, an authority on the medicine of the Chumash Indian tribes, and a collector of Indian relics and art. Arriving in Ventura in 1868, after service in the Civil War and his training at Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia, Dr. Bard was the County's first Coroner, an early-day postmaster and even found time to serve a term as a San Buenaventura Town Trustee (councilman). One of the charter members and first president of the Ventura County Medical Society, Dr. Bard also was elected president of the Southern California Medical Society in 1894. He was first president of the Ventura County Society of Pioneers. After his death, his collection of curios was given to the Society and formed the nucleus of what became the Pioneer Museum. The Society of Pioneers and the Pioneer Museum are the forerunners, respectively, of the Ventura County Historical Society and the Ventura County Historical Museum.

But it was on unreserved devotion to his patients and their well-being that made Dr. Bard one of the most revered and beloved citizens of his time. During his close to 40 years of medical practice, day or night, sun or rain, Dr. Bard would go any place to care for anyone, rich or poor, who was ill. The exhausting pace took him over alternatively dusty and deep-muddy dirt roads as far as Simi and on frequent jaunts to Santa Paula and the Ojai Valley.

Dr. Bard was well-known for his kind and comforting bedside manner, as this recollection many years later by a former patient attests:

... His smiling countenance and commanding figure radiated good cheer and confidence throughout a sick room. While doffing his big blue overcoat at the threshold, he would begin a sparkling monologue of news and witticisms. By the time he took a seat beside the bed with his fingers on the pulse of the patient, he would have the atmosphere cleared of gloom and fear...⁷

The younger brother of Thomas R. Bard (another Ventura pioneer financier, oil man, land developer, and eventually, U.S. Senator), Dr. Bard died a poor man, but rich in the esteem of the community. His funeral in 1902, with its outpouring of tributes, was probably the largest and most elaborate to date in Ventura County history.

In the last few years of the doctor's life, the Bard brothers founded and built Elizabeth Bard Memorial Hospital, named in honor of their mother.

Dr. Bard died in that hospital soon after it opened its doors. But it was County Hospital where Dr. Bard was in effect medical director for many years, dating from its completion on August 1, 1887.

By June of 1887, contractors Hund and Horn were proceeding apace with construction of County Hospital. The two-story frame building taking shape was impressive for its day, with its own boardwalk in front, a balcony, and laundry lines in back. It was situated on the north side of Meta Street (now Thompson Blvd.) west of Figueroa near Walnut (now Junipero). This is the present site of the Ventura Unified School District Administration Center service yard where school buses are parked and maintained.

When plans for the building under construction were drawn up, the architect thought of everything — almost. The Board of Supervisors, later deciding that a water closet was essential to the operation of a modern hospital, voted an additional appropriation to have a top-of-the-line model installed in the "Bath Room."⁸

On August 1, the building was completed, with the total cost having increased to \$5,492, and was formally accepted by the Board of Supervisors.



(VCHM)

The First Official County Hospital, Meta Street (Thompson) near Figueroa.

The Board had previously commissioned Mrs. John Larmer as the first Superintendent "to take care of and maintain the hospital (except furnishing wood for warming rooms, and clothing for patients) at \$4 per week per patient, this to include provisions, lights and nursing services."⁹

For whatever reason, Mrs. Larmer did not last long. In December, Dr. Joshua Marks was appointed Superintendent. He was to receive \$5 per patient per week, but was to furnish everything but clothing for the patients. His appointment was a three-month trial run. Apparently his services were satisfactory, for he was still at it in 1890 when this intriguing inside glimpse of the hospital was written:

...The building has recently been renovated; its walls calcimined and cheerful pictures hung upon them; the wood-work is clean with fresh paint and carpets are laid on most of the passage-ways... In the lower hall is a case containing a number of books and periodicals.

The office contains a supply of medicines; the wards are well-lighted, well-ventilated, commodious and comfortably fitted. There are four wards upstairs and two down — in all about 18 beds. At present, 13 beds are occupied — 11 by men and two by old ladies of neat and tidy appearance, disabled by rheumatism from work.

The kitchen is well-kept, and it and the pantry seem to be supplied with viands of a better quality than is usual in such institutions.

The outhouses are ample and orderly, the grounds cheerful with flowers, and the kitchen-garden filled with vegetables. This hospital seems less formal and more homelike than most refuges of the sort. It is under the management of Dr. Cephas L. Bard, the County Physician, and of Dr. Joshua Marks, the Hospital Superintendent...¹⁰

That same contemporary account casts some additional light on the funding of County Hospital's construction and early-day maintenance:

Until within the past few years the poor were "farmed out;" then the attention of Mr. W.H. Jewett, County Auditor and Recorder, having been called to an act of the Legislature of 1882 to provide aid for the indigent sick, he looked up the records, and claims were made out for \$1,800. This being allowed, the matter was pressed, and Ventura County was found to be entitled to \$10,700 from this source, and the amount was duly collected from the respective fund or appropriations.¹¹

In March of 1890, the *Ventura Vidette* dispatched a reporter to write a feature story on the hospital, and this writer's praise of the facility was even more lavish in a front page story: "With so excellent a Superintendent and with Dr. C.L. Bard as physician — he being one of the best in the state — no one need fear the County Hospital, for many can fare better there than at their own homes. The Hospital is a credit to Ventura County,"¹² the article concluded.

Before and after the turn of the century, the hospital superintendents lived in the hospital itself, until 1909, when a cottage was built across the street. First occupant was Amerigo L. Cagnacci, the superintendent appointed that year who would serve in the top job until 1938.¹³ Cagnacci, according to a Ventura County historian, "was particularly considerate and kind in his treatment of the aged who come to the County Hospital; and as its superintendent, has not only manifested marked efficiency but also a spirit of humanitarianism."¹⁴



Kate and Amerigo L. Cagnacci

No question that Cagnacci would need all the efficiency and humanitarian energy he could muster during his long term as superintendent, for that nearly three-decade period between 1909 and 1938 was one of marked change and advancement in health care and continuing expansion of County Hospital; it was an era full of difficult challenges and crises locally as well.

One of the first challenges with which Cagnacci had to contend was an increasing caseload accompanying the steady growth in Ventura County population. This was in part due to the growing number of tuberculosis patients. In 1911, a cottage especially for the care and treatment of TB patients was added to the county buildings. Over the next half-century, County Hospital would remain in the forefront of care for tuberculosis patients, expanding its efforts and facilities to do so until mid-century when the disease was virtually eradicated.

In 1918, the great influenza epidemic raging across the nation hit Ventura with a vengeance. On October 18, in a *Free Press* story headlined "SPANISH FLU INCREASING ALL OVER STATE," it was reported that "there are but few cases in this city, and there is no alarm here."¹⁵ The alarm sounded one week later — the newspaper reported 76 documented cases; schools, churches, theaters and all other places of public assemblage were being closed.

The County Hospital is crowded with patients and to make the situation worse, both nurses in charge are down with the malady. Hospital Superintendent Cagnacci, backed by the Supervisors, has given orders that he will admit no more patients. The County situation is very bad.¹⁶

Within a week, the Methodist Church was converted into a temporary emergency hospital to care for the growing patient overflow. A community kitchen was set up to feed flu victims who had no one to care for them. The Board of Health ordered "that every person suffering from a cold in the head or acute cough, or any of the other recognized symptoms of influenza or grippe, shall wear a mask of approved type while outside their own living apartment."¹⁷ The order also applied to doctors, nurses, hospital visitors, and all members of every family in which one person had the flu. Eventually, the San Buenaventura Town Trustees passed a "mask law," subjecting violators to arrest and fine.

By the end of November, the epidemic that had outstripped County Hospital's resources and capabilities and had exhausted doctors, nurses and community workers was winding down. The Methodist Church was reconverted from emergency hospital to house of worship. In early December, the *Free Press* assessed the overall toll: More than 30 dead in the City of Ventura alone, and possibly as many as 42 more deaths traceable to the flu countywide.¹⁸

In the next year, 1919, two events represented significant beginnings for County Hospital. One was the decision by County Supervisors to build a new hospital facility because the two-story frame building on Meta

Street was no longer sufficient. The second was the return of Ralph W. "Pick" Homer, M.D. from service in World War I. Dr. Homer was appointed County Physician in 1919; Medical Director of County Hospital in 1921.

Facing a growing population and increasing demands on the County health care facility, the Board of Supervisors in 1919 awarded a \$90,200 contract for the construction of a new hospital. Two years later, a new, reinforced concrete, fireproof building was completed "out in the country" at the then-east end of town on what eventually would become Loma Vista Road.

Spanish-Renaissance in style, the hospital proper consisted of one large central building flanked at each end with a wing extending at an angle, designed to give sun to each of the rooms on the south side. Its sprawling, 19-acre campus overlooking the sea provided room for future expansion, one of the most important features of the site.



(VCHM)

1921 County Hospital, ca. 1930. This building still exists as part of the VCMC complex. The 1953 four-story addition was built onto the front of this original structure at the Loma Vista site.

Maternity rooms and operating room were on the second floor. Tubercular wards had special ventilating systems invented by Cagnacci. In the

basement was the detention ward. A new, five-room cottage was built on the grounds for Cagnacci and his family, and the former home of the Superintendent was moved to the site to become nurses' quarters. The cottage on Meta St. formerly used for TB patients was also moved across town to the new hospital campus.

On September 16, 1921, in a story headlined "COUNTY HOSPITAL IS COMPLETED, READY FOR USE," the *Free Press* reported that 30 patients were already being cared for in the hospital, which had a capacity of nearly 100 beds. The hospital is "one of the most modern and efficient in the state,"¹⁹ the story said.

Meanwhile, the original, frame County Hospital building on Meta Street had been abandoned after 34 years of service and was standing vacant. County Supervisors were trying to sell it, with little success. In August of 1921, they turned down the highest bid received — \$385. Supervisors said they would wreck the building themselves before they would sell it at "such a ridiculous price."²⁰ That is exactly what happened. The venerable old structure was demolished in 1922.

If the 19th century pioneer of medical practice and health care in Ventura County was Dr. Bard, his 20th century counterpart as pioneer clearly was Ralph W. "Pick" Homer, M.D. Dr. Homer's career of 46 years spanned horse-and-buggy to the Space Age, one of the fastest-changing and most fascinating eras in the history of health care.

Following medical school at UCLA and one year of internship at Los Angeles County Hospital, Dr. Homer began his practice in 1912 in Ventura, joining Dr. G.N. Stockwell in his office near the intersection of Oak and Santa Clara Streets, then a miniature medical district.

"Stockwell had an old two-cylinder Maxwell automobile, but I usually used a horse and buggy," Dr. Homer, now deceased, recalled in an interview many years later. "You had to go a long way over rough roads to see patients, and sometimes the Maxwell wouldn't make it."²¹

In that same account, Dr. Homer recalled the time in those early days that he was summoned by rancher Bob Clark, later Ventura County Sheriff and U.S. Marshal, to his ranch to deliver a Clark baby.

It had been raining hard the day before. The roads were muddy. And to get to his place in Foster Park, I'd have to cross the Ventura River. It was flooding, and two boys had drowned at the crossing that morning.

Bob met me at the crossing, and in the dark on his big white horse, we started across the river. With both of us riding, the horse's back was under water. But we made it across even though the current washed us about 300 feet downstream.²²

Dr. Homer would demonstrate the same sort of persistence and energy throughout the remainder of his whirlwind, multi-faceted professional life.



Ralph W. "Pick"
Homer, M.D.

(VCMC)

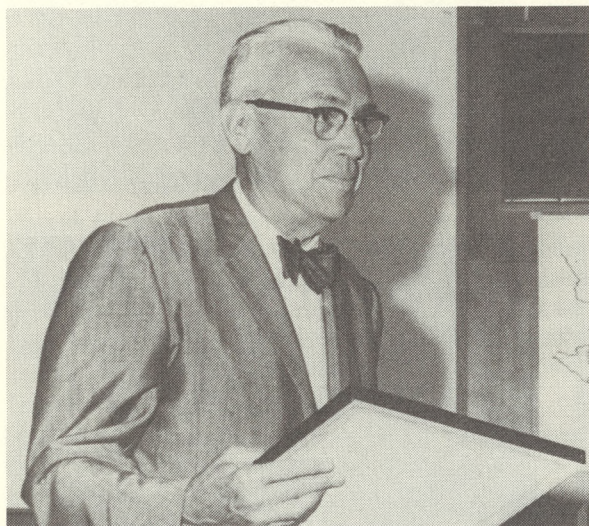
In addition to serving as Medical Director of County Hospital from 1921 to his retirement in 1958, Dr. Homer maintained a busy private practice and also served as Chief of Staff of Foster Memorial Hospital (now Community Memorial Hospital). He called himself a "general practitioner." He was that in the best sense of the word and was in fact a talented and innovative surgeon.

"He did everything," recalled J. Austin Daly, M.D. a former County Hospital Medical Director and, years before that, a resident under Dr. Homer. "Anyone who came here did not and could not possibly get the experience Dr. Homer had. He was quick to adopt new ideas in surgical techniques and develop his talents. . . ." ²³ In his long career, Dr. Homer performed almost every type of surgery from brain tumor to chest to eye operations to complex trauma reparative surgery. He spent much of his time teaching surgical techniques to other doctors.

Therein lies perhaps Dr. Homer's most enduring contribution to medical care in Ventura County. He was an enthusiastic, gifted teacher of medicine and he had a vision: development of a first-rate teaching hospital and a high-quality training program for physicians. From small beginnings of a residency program at County Hospital in the 1920s, his dream has been fulfilled one hundredfold.

In 1928, Charles A. Smolt, M.D. a young physician fresh out of internship at Los Angeles County General, came to Ventura's County Hospital to work under Dr. Homer as the hospital's first-ever resident. County Hospital was then a 100-bed facility serving a Ventura city population of about 10,000 and a county population of about 60,000. With the steady growth of the Ventura Avenue oil fields, the economy and the population were booming.

Dr. Smolt arrived two weeks after the St. Francis Dam disaster — a disaster which claimed the lives of some 400 Ventura County residents. About 20 survivors of that tragedy were still patients in the hospital when Dr. Smolt began work.



Charles A. Smolt, M.D.

On his arrival, Dr. Smolt found some shiny new buildings located on a country road, virtually the only structures east of what is now Ventura High School. A circular drive in front of the main building bordered a prolific orange grove, and sheep were pastured on the hills behind the hospital campus during winters. Superintendent Cagnacci had an extensive vegetable garden which also helped feed patients and various personnel who lived at the hospital. Cagnacci also "made quite a respectable home brew for which we were grateful at the end of a hot afternoon,"²⁴ recalled Dr. Smolt, now retired, in a commencement address to graduating resident physicians in 1978.

Near the hospital's entrance was a receiving office, "but we had no receptionist and patients were admitted by whomever happened to be handy. This office boasted one steel file in which were supposed to be pa-

tient charts, but in fact these charts existed almost solely in Dr. Homer's phenomenal memory. There was also a PBX board, but as there was no operator, one phone was plugged in for the first floor and the other into surgery on the second floor, and calls were fielded from these."²⁵

The hospital personnel consisted of Dr. Homer, Cagnacci and four Registered Nurses who worked 12-hour shifts. Maids and convalescing patients kept the building clean. The laboratory was equipped with one new microscope and the hospital would not have its own X-ray machine until the following year.

One week after Dr. Smolt began his residency, County Hospital opened its first outpatient clinic, on the first day serving a grand total of six patients. It would not long remain such a small-scale operation. As the Roaring Twenties faded into the Great Depression, with its unemployment and hardship, the demand for charity care increased dramatically. The outpatient clinic population was suddenly being numbered in the hundreds and soon in the thousands. Lillian Smolt, M.D., wife of Dr. Charles Smolt, was appointed director of the outpatient clinic, a post she held until long after World War II.



(VCMC)

Lillian Smolt, M.D.



(Helen Boyd)

Loma Hall, Completed 1937, Was First an Out-patient Clinic. The hall was torn down in the summer of 1981, after being used for many years as a security unit for patients needing maximum security.

Despite and partly because of the ailing economy, the 1930s were a time of significant growth for County Hospital. Facilities were expanding and new departments were being added. The hospital built an extensive Contagious Disease Ward, a Psychiatric Unit, a building for the aged, more nurses' quarters and residents' quarters.



(Helen Boyd)

Growth in the 1930s: Psychiatric Unit (Left).

"Quite modern in its day, especially considering it was built to serve as a relief from the dungeon-like area which served as its forerunner, located in the basement of the old hospital building. This new psychiatric unit had six steel-barred cells with food-pass slots on each side, one for women, one for men. The unit was essentially a holding unit pending transfer of the patient to the state hospital" (Helen Boyd).

Geriatric Unit (Right).

"The male geriatric unit, housing some 18-20 elderly men, was supervised by a man who raised pigeons (for eating purposes) between the two buildings. Growing problems, accentuated by a knife and axe fight in the building in late 1956, led to the building being emptied and the patients separated out into nursing homes in the community. In 1958, the unit was used as a female geriatric unit, housing some 40 elderly women. This was the first area of service undertaken by the newly formed General Hospital Auxiliary. The volunteers provided birthday parties, hair care, clothing, decorations, programs and many other things to make life just a little nicer for the elderly patients" (Helen Boyd).

Today the two buildings, now joined together by a hallway, serve entirely different purposes. The refurbished building on the left is the Pediatrics Clinic; the one on the right is the Women's Health Center.

When Dr. Smolt organized the Tuberculosis Department with a state subsidy in the late 1920s, he started with about 20 patients; the numbers steadily grew. At the completion of the hospital's new tuberculosis unit the capacity was 104; 110 patients were squeezed into the unit and the department still had a waiting list. Until a week before the building — a



Ventura County Medical Center.

This aerial photo shows Ventura County Medical Center as it is today on its 19-acre campus on Loma Vista Road. At the rear of the main complex, with diagonal wings, is the original building



(VCMC)

at present site, completed in 1921. Attached, at front, is the 1953 addition. Structure with heliport, attached to the left of the '53 addition, is the David Fainer, M.D. Wing, completed in 1984.

striking, one-story structure atop the hospital campus hill — was dedicated, each County Supervisor advocated a different name for the unit.²⁶ Fittingly it was dedicated on May 12, 1939, as Bard Sanitorium, to memorialize the early-day accomplishments of Cephas L. Bard, M.D. Under the direction of Dr. Smolt and Ruth Anderson, M.D. the unit operated at full capacity for many years, the leading resource in the area for the treatment of the disease and care of its victims. Twenty years later, with the advent of anti-tuberculosis drugs, the patient population had dwindled to the point where the facility was no longer needed for TB treatment.



(Helen Boyd)

Growth in the 1930s: Personnel Housing. L-R: resident physicians' quarters; orderlies' quarters; nurses' quarters. "Nurses could live there for \$10 a month, including parking space (by seniority). Some of the nurses lived in this building for essentially a lifetime" (Helen Boyd).

In 1938, Cagnacci retired and was succeeded by Lyle Walters as Superintendent. His 18-year tenure would also be one of challenges, change and major expansion. Walters ascended to the Superintendent's job during a time of solid growth for County Hospital's burgeoning residency program, with the enrollment of several outstanding young medical graduates. Many of those trained at County Hospital remained to practice



(Helen Boyd)

Bard Sanitorium, Dedicated 1939

in Ventura County and have made significant contributions to local health care. Before long, the residency program's presence was prompting locals to refer to County Hospital as "Dr. Homer's Medical College."²⁷ With County Hospital maturing into a comprehensive, highly-regarded health care facility, and the positive reputation of its residency program spreading nationwide, more and more young doctors were seeking admission into the program.

This all came to an abrupt halt with the onset of World War II and its insatiable demand for medical manpower. The supply of incoming residents dried up — young doctors were heading for service in the armed forces. Dr. Smolt recalled that at one point during the War, the program was down to one resident; there were never more than two or three at a time until the end of the conflict. Complicating the problem was the fact that a number of community and hospital staff physicians also left to serve in the War as well.²⁸ The workloads of the doctors who stayed behind increased astronomically, with most of them carrying the burden of exhausting, seven-day-a-week work schedules.



Ruth Anderson, M.D.

(VCMC)

Intense competition for residents among hospitals across the nation after the war slowed down the inflow of new residents to County Hospital for a time; however, the excellent reputation the program had built up in pre-war days proved an attractive advantage for Dr. Homer's recruiting efforts.

During the 1940s and 1950s, County Hospital was responsive to another of the most urgent, tragic health crises of all: the polio epidemic. The Department of Occupational Therapy serving polio victims was established in early 1940. In the forefront of local care, the hospital's polio program gave post-polio victims new hope and helped many of them regain use of their limbs and walk again. The program generated a good many success stories, such as this affecting account that ran in the *Star-Free Press* in May, 1950:

Ten-year-old Jeanne Morgan, who some doctors said would never bend her legs again, yesterday kicked and splashed as she became the first polio victim to use the newly installed Hubbard pool at Ventura County Hospital...

Happy at the thought of putting the new pool to work was Mrs. Rhoda Roberts, physiotherapist at the County Hospital, who labeled it as the "first step toward a polio treatment program that will make Ventura County's facilities second to none..."

Mrs. Morgan and the other parents who came to the hospital yesterday to bring their children to Mrs. Roberts were liberal with their praise of County Hospital and Mrs. Roberts. Each of them stated that the work being done there was nearly unbelievable and that it was impossible to express the appreciation they felt. . . .²⁹

The Hubbard pool tank mentioned above was the forerunner of a permanent polio treatment pool, financed largely through the efforts of the Ventura Soroptomist Club. Responding to the need for a pool "deep enough for patients to walk in," the ladies raised \$16,000 in a countywide fundraising drive. Less than one decade later, thanks to the Salk polio vaccine and a successful immunization program locally, the pool was no longer needed; it was then floored over.

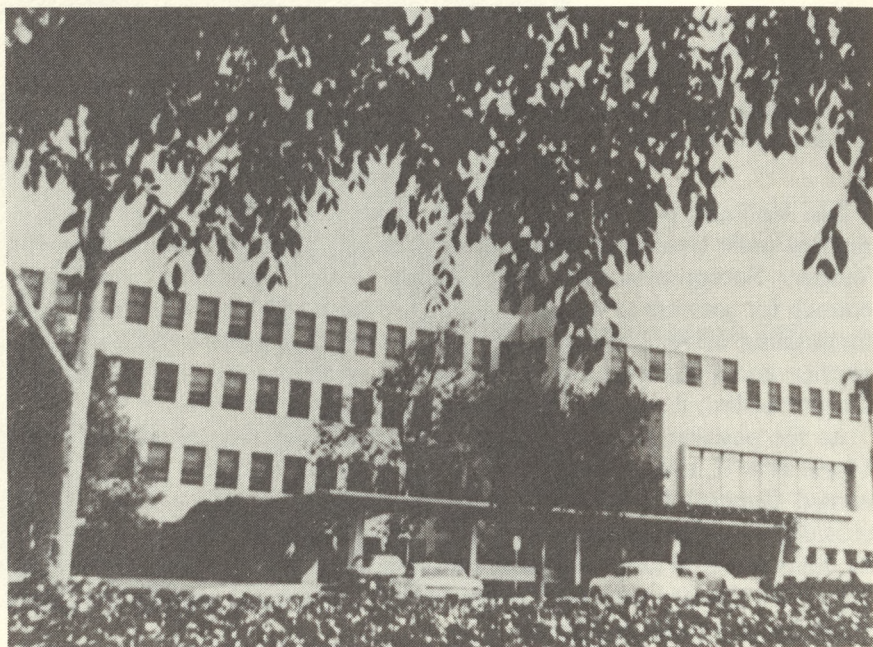
As the postwar population and patient load began mushrooming after World War II, it was again crisis time for County Hospital, soon to be renamed General Hospital of Ventura County. Patient beds had to be crowded into the hallways of the 1921 building and surgical and other facilities were no longer adequate to meet the growing needs. In November, 1950, County voters approved a \$1,250,000 bond issue to fund construction of a modern hospital.

When construction was begun in 1951, much of the spacious front lawn of the hospital was torn up to make way for the new structure. On November 7, 1953, the four-story T-shaped building, attached to the front of the original 1921 building, was completed, dwarfing the graceful structure which had served Venturans for 30-plus years. Medical and surgical patients were moved into the new building and many of the services previously housed in the older part of the complex were now moved to brand-spanking-new quarters. The opening of the renovated General Hospital of Ventura County was an occasion of community pride and fanfare, as this editorial in the *Star-Free Press* attests:

An Asset to the County

The impressive new addition to the Ventura County General Hospital, viewed by many citizens during a weekend open house, ought to be a cause of satisfaction to everybody. Completion of this building not only makes this public institution outstanding for counties of our calibre, but also highlights dramatically the progress our community has been making in total facilities for the ailing. . . .³⁰

In 1956, Kenneth Rindflesh was appointed Administrator of General Hospital, succeeding Lyle Walters. Another significant event of that year — one that would hold important implications for future years — was the



County Hospital, 1953 Addition

(VCMC)

founding of the Medical Research Foundation. The Foundation, an independent, nonprofit organization which raises funds and supports programs and specialized equipment needs at the hospital, is a logical extension of Dr. Smolt's original funding efforts.

Back in the 1930s, Dr. Smolt had started developing a fund for a medical library for the hospital as an educational resource for residents and community physicians. Today, the Lillian Smolt Memorial Library (named in honor of Dr. Smolt's late wife) serves health professionals throughout the county.³¹

Throughout its existence, the hospital has benefited from community support. An essential branch of this support — that of volunteer labor — was formalized in 1956 with the founding of the General Hospital Auxiliary. In its formative decade, the Auxiliary's primary service was to the 75 to 80 geriatric patients who were permanent residents on hospital grounds.

With the arrival of Helen Boyd as Director of the Auxiliary in 1966, the group took on the additional task of raising funds for a variety of ongoing needs at the hospital. Boyd, a talented musician-singer, produced, directed and performed in a series of melodramas which became increasingly lucra-

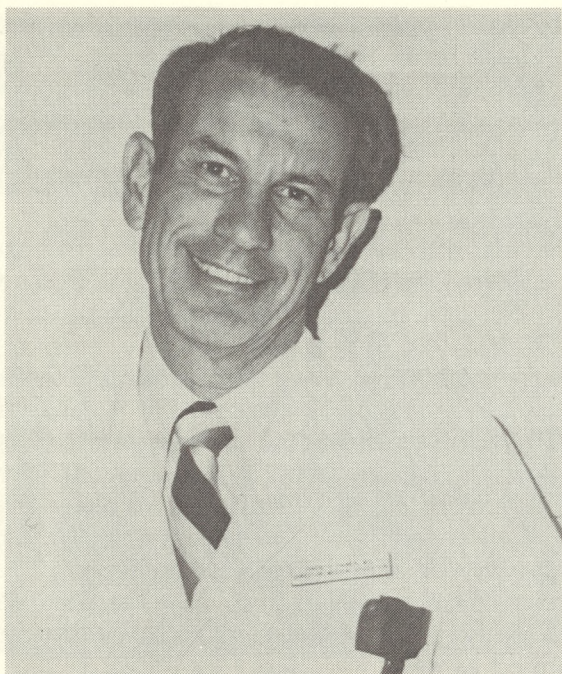
tive fund-raisers. Another particularly successful effort under Mrs. Boyd's direction was the "Green Door" project; the Auxiliary would obtain defective or broken toys from a Los Angeles manufacturer — free of charge — repair them, using all-volunteer help, then sell them to the public. Mrs. Boyd's Auxiliary was also successful in inducing more than 50 local clubs and other organizations to conduct their own fund-raising projects for the benefit of the hospital.

Just how successful were these efforts? An indication is one early Auxiliary project: the raising of more than \$50,000 toward the development and ongoing support of the Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery, opened in 1973.

In 1984, fund-raising functions of the Auxiliary were transferred to the newly instituted Development Office of the Foundation. The Auxiliary's primary focus then turned toward increasing the placements of volunteers to assist staff and patients in different areas of the hospital. Under Mrs. Boyd's successor, Sylvia Worrick, the VCMC Auxiliary now has some 150 volunteers working several hours a week in the clinics, Pediatrics, Emergency Department and other areas of the hospital. The Auxiliary continues to operate the hospital Gift Shop, as it has since the group's founding in 1956; the Tree House fast-food outlet behind the hospital is an Auxiliary project as well.

In 1958 Dr. Homer's 37 years as Medical Director of County Hospital came to an end; his failing vision forced him to retire. He was succeeded by a full-time Medical Director, J. Austin Daly, M.D. who helped further develop the Residency Program. Dr. Daly, now retired, was an able administrator and active recruiter of new residents. Under his tenure, increasing numbers of young medical graduates across the nation began to seek out residencies at General Hospital of Ventura County; recruitment became increasingly unnecessary. Succeeding years have brought steady growth and an increase in national stature to the Residency Program. In 1968, it became one of the first 15 residency programs approved for the then-new specialty of Family Practice.

In 1972, the late David C. Fainer, M.D. became fulltime Director of Medical Education, Director of the Family Practice Residency Program and Coordinator of Internal Medicine at General Hospital. Dr. Fainer, a highly talented clinician and administrator, and a gifted teacher of medicine, was and is lovingly revered by his colleagues, resident physicians, his patients, and by many in the community at large. It was under his guidance that the Family Practice Residency Program vastly increased its educational service resources by becoming associated with the UCLA School of Medicine. Dr. Fainer is generally credited with playing a



David Fainer, M.D.

(VCMC)

major role in developing the Family Practice Residency into the nationally top-ranked program it is today. Each year, hundreds of graduates from top medical schools across the nation apply for the dozen or so slots available in the program.

Now under the direction of Fran S. Larsen, M.D., the program currently has 37 resident physicians and two post-graduate Fellows. They are receiving broad-based medical training which enables them to take care of up to 90 percent of their patient's health care needs.

Working under the supervision of senior medical faculty, attending physicians and community private practice doctors who volunteer their time to teach, the residents are said by observers to be an excellent asset to patient care in the hospital, providing a high ratio of doctor to patients coverage around the clock.

In their practices, graduates of the Family Practice Residency typically treat family members of all ages, providing personalized, continuing care over many years, just as the family doctor of years past did for his patients. The Residents are trained to be advocates for their patients in today's high-tech medical environment, and their emphasis — preventive health care.

Of the many graduates of the Residency Program over the years, nearly 100 have remained in Ventura County to practice. And yet the ongoing impact of the program is even greater than that: the Residency Program is the major continuing medical education resource for practicing physicians in the community.

Paralleling the development of the Family Practice Residency program in the 1960s and 1970s, General Hospital of Ventura County was itself ex-

periencing steady growth, adapting and responding to the ever-changing health care needs of Ventura County citizens. This period was one of dramatically rapid advancement in health care techniques and technology. Being a teaching hospital, General Hospital reflected and kept current with these medical advancements in the constant updating of care services to its patients. This was an across-the-board phenomenon, but particularly visible in such areas as emergency services, surgery, intensive care, coronary care and prenatal and postnatal care services.

Although the hospital's primary mandate since its founding was to serve the poor, more and more cases over the years were covered by one form of insurance or another. In 1966, the Board of Supervisors officially designated the facility as a "community hospital" that would admit and treat all patients, regardless of their economic circumstances. From that time to the present, the hospital has treated private pay patients as well as those unable to pay. About 20 to 30 percent of the patient caseload has been private, primarily patients covered by private insurance. The other major patient classifications are Medi-Cal, Medicare, MIAs (Medically Indigent Adults), and self-pay patients.

During the 1970s, fulltime physician Coordinators were appointed to head up the major departments of the hospital, such as Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics/Gynecology and several other specialties.

In 1973, General Hospital established its Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery to provide specialized, lifesaving care for critically ill newborns and tiny premature infants. Staffed by neonatologist physicians and specially trained nurses, this facility remains the only one of its kind between the San Fernando Valley and San Jose. Each year, with the improvements in medical expertise and increasingly sophisticated equipment, the Nursery has been able to save and nurture tinier and tinier premature infants. General Hospital had always been a local leader in caring for expectant mothers facing complications and these efforts were formalized into the area's only High-Risk Pregnancy Program around the time that the Newborn Intensive Care Nursery was established.

By the early 1970s, General Hospital had provided care at its outpatient clinic at the hospital itself for more than 40 years. The outpatient population had grown steadily since that first day back in 1928 when six patients had presented themselves for care. Now a continually increasing need for clinic services convenient to persons not living near the hospital was becoming more and more evident and acute. Responding to this, General Hospital made significant strides in the early 1970s toward establishing what would become a countywide network of satellite medical clinics.



Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery

(VCMC)

This was long before hospitals across the nation began the trend of increasing emphasis on outpatient services.

The first fledgling effort came in 1969 with the establishment of a medical clinic in rented space at a Baptist church in the Colonia district of Oxnard. By the next year, more permanent and spacious quarters were found for the Oxnard Clinic. That same year saw the opening of the Santa Paula Clinic, originally in some unused rooms of a Methodist church there. In 1971, the Simi Clinic was established.

In 1972 outpatient services on the main hospital campus were further strengthened with the opening of the Family Care Center located in the building that had been built decades before as the Contagious Diseases Ward. The Family Care Center is organized along the lines of a private group practice of family physicians, in which resident physicians working under the supervision of attending doctors provide outpatient care to patients whom they follow through the three years of residency. With the growth of the Residency Program and an expanding Family Care Center patient population, a Family Care Annex was later built to accommodate the increase.

The 1970s also saw the development of a number of specialty clinics on the hospital's main campus that continue to serve the countywide population today. What began as the Women's and Children's Clinic has since been divided into the Women's Health Center, providing a full range of

obstetrical and gynecologic health services, and a Pediatrics Clinic. The always-busy Orthopedics Clinic also had its formal start in the 1970s. In addition, a number of other medical, surgical and subspecialty clinics were established in this active decade of expansion for the hospital.

In 1973, Michael H. Erne, then the 27-year-old Associate Administrator of the hospital, was appointed Administrator, succeeding Kenneth Rind-flesh. In his 13-year tenure, Erne would preside over a major turning point for General Hospital and an extensive expansion program.

By 1979, General Hospital found itself in somewhat the same crisis position it had faced back in the late 1940s: its facilities, particularly the main hospital building, had fallen behind the pace of expanding patient propulation. The hospital needed modernization and it needed more space for several of its departments. "A HOSPITAL IN TROUBLE: County General's Fate is of Vital Importance to Many,"³² said one headline in early April. "CLOSE HOSPITAL OR REPLACE IT, REPORT SAYS,"³³ trumpeted another. One school of thought advocated closing the hospital for good if a way could be found to provide care for the poor at other local hospitals.

A great many Ventura County residents strongly opposed closure of the health care facility on which several generations of Venturans had always depended. Strong community support for the hospital's continued existence and refurbishing was mobilized by the Ventura County Commission on Human Concerns and Community Development and by the entirely-volunteer, ad hoc Coordinating Committee on Health Care. Many petitions were distributed and signed.

A consulting firm engaged by the Board of Supervisors recommended that the hospital should either be closed or replaced by 1990 and that the Board should choose one of those alternatives by 1985. Nevertheless, the consultants also found much that was positive — high quality care at reasonable cost, service which the community could depend on, decreasing cost to the County since 1974 due to increasing federal aid, and a young and highly qualified staff and efficient administration.³⁴

Supervisors chose neither the closure nor complete replacement alternatives. They adopted a different course; action on the matter came much sooner than 1985. In February, 1982, ground was broken for a new, four-story addition to the hospital to be built onto the west end of the existing 1953 portion of the complex. The plan included eventual remodeling of the entire hospital.

In the fall of 1982, several months after construction had gotten under way, the Board of Supervisors acted to change the name of General Hospital of Ventura County to Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC)

to more accurately reflect its wide range of services and capabilities.

On May 30, 1984, the completed wing — named in honor of Dr. Fainer, who had died the previous year — was dedicated. The \$12 million, state-of-the-art David Fainer Wing added 46,000 square feet of hospital space including a new Emergency Department on the ground floor, linked to a rooftop heliport by high-speed elevator; new maternity, orthopedic and critical care units; and expanded Central Supply and Inpatient Pharmacy areas. The project also included the renovation of 10,000 square feet of the existing building.

The 28-bed Emergency Department, more than doubled in capacity, was equipped to handle a full range of medical crises, ranging from cardiac arrests to severe burns, to trauma resulting from motorcycle and auto accidents, to industrial and oil rig accidents. Emergency specialists were present around the clock and more than 100 staff physicians, including all the major medical specialties, are on call. Equipped with the latest in sophisticated monitoring systems, the Intensive Care and Coronary Care Units on the third floor were designed to provide visibility into each patient's room while preserving patient privacy. Design of the Obstetrics Unit included elements to meet several needs. In the Unit are three delivery rooms which provide capabilities ranging from performing Caesarian sections to use of birthing chairs; a central fetal monitoring system and ante-partum rooms enable staff to give special attention to high-risk OB patients. The combination labor and delivery suite with a 20-bed post-partum unit is accompanied by private labor rooms and a four-bed recovery room. The second floor Orthopedics Unit brought acute inpatient treatment up to state-of-the-art, with semi-private rooms and specialized facilities such as a cast room and physical therapy treatment rooms.³⁵

VCMC services and capabilities have continued to grow in response to County residents' health care needs in the 1980s. In outpatient services, three new community-based clinics have been established: the Moorpark Clinic in 1981; the West Ventura Clinic, on the Avenue, 1983; the South Oxnard Family Care Center in 1986. At the main hospital facility in 1985, VCMC established its Day Surgery program — eliminating the need for overnight hospital stays for selected operations. Since that time, the program has served a growing number of patients. Later in 1985, VCMC started its Rapid Care service in conjunction with the Emergency Department for fast, economical treatment of minor injury or illness.

During the 1980s, the pace of medical research by staff doctors and residents quickened, with a number of studies published in medical literature. Studies have examined various topics ranging from labor and

delivery to uses and implications of new high-potency antibiotics to evaluation of a geriatric assessment program. Several VCMC researchers have presented their papers at national medical conventions. Much of the research conducted by VCMC is supported by the Medical Research Foundation.

The Foundation has become increasingly active and important to the Medical Center in the 1980s. In addition to funding research, it supports visiting professorships and the acquisition of teaching equipment for the Residency Program as well as providing funds for the Lillian Smolt Medical Library. The Foundation also has funded or partially funded many resources for direct patient care. Examples are the Genetics Program; sophisticated, expensive equipment for the Newborn Intensive Care Nursery and the High-Risk Pregnancy Program; the Paramedic Base Station Radio and a number of other lifesaving equipment items for the Emergency Department. The Foundation's Development Program solicits contributions from corporations, other foundations and the general public in a variety of fund-raising programs.

This last year in the life of Ventura County Medical Center has been as eventful as any in the past. In late 1986, John W. Puryear was appointed VCMC Administrator, succeeding Michael Erne, who had resigned to take a hospital administration post in San Diego. Also in late 1986, interim hospital administration and County authorities were beginning to assess the impact of an impending financial crisis.

For several years, a disturbing trend had been confronting public hospitals throughout the state. Two conflicting forces — an increase in the population of Medically Indigent (uninsured poor adults) coupled with a dramatic decrease in state funding for their treatment — were putting a tight squeeze on public health care facilities. In that time, several public hospitals around the state were forced to close and the remainder were experiencing financial difficulties.

Not surprisingly, the problem of shrinking funding for Medically Indigent Adults hit Ventura County and became the main reason for financial shortfalls at VCMC.³⁶ Further complications: there had been computer breakdowns creating problems with billings and collections at the same time that premiums for malpractice insurance were skyrocketing.

By mid-year, the arithmetic of the situation had become distressingly clear. In fiscal year 1986-87 the Medical Center budget was \$55 million. Projected revenues for fiscal year 1987-88 were only \$40 million. The Board of Supervisors was able to add \$7 million, a \$6 million increase over the previous year's support. That left VCMC \$47 million to carry out a \$55 million program.³⁷ To deal with the deficit, Puryear was forced to

prepare proposed reductions in the Medical Center's operations that would conform to the \$47 million budget. The reductions involved "downsizing" the hospital itself and closing the satellite clinics.

During this process, there was an outpouring of community support for VCMC, just as there had been in the crisis less than a decade before. Again, committees were formed, petitions were signed, and the media editorialized. At the July Beilenson Hearings conducted by the Board of Supervisors (mandated by law to give the public an opportunity to comment on changes affecting services to the poor), witness after witness praised the hospital and its services and opposed the proposed cutbacks and closing of the clinics. Among those testifying were health professionals, concerned citizens, community groups, and patients who depend on the clinics and hospital for their health care.

Following the hearings, the Board of Supervisors was able to transfer \$900,000 to the hospital to keep the clinics operating. In addition, Supervisors set up a \$1 million contingency fund for the Medical Center.

However, essential additional funds were lacking; the Board did have to order the "downsizing" of the hospital itself. Examples: A reduction of 27 staffed medical-surgical beds; merging of the Intensive Care Unit and the Coronary Care Unit into one Critical Care Unit; and other reductions in various departments. These reductions refer only to the number of beds actually in service at present. The original capacity of the hospital is still intact. VCMC is still licensed as a 196-bed hospital. Because the clinics remained open and because several positions at the hospital were vacant, the number of staff persons having to be laid off was much lower than originally projected.³⁸

The "downsizing" did not change the basic structure of the Medical Center, nor did it curtail the availability of VCMC's specialized services, some of which are not offered elsewhere. There was little or no effect on several departments, including emergency services, high-risk obstetrics and neonatal intensive care.³⁹

The net effect has been to make VCMC a somewhat smaller hospital in terms of its present staffing and occupancy — a condition that hospital administrators regard as temporary, a time of stabilization and rebuilding.⁴⁰

VCMC administrators say the reductions have not and will not diminish the quality of care for which the hospital has long been known. Samuel R. Edwards, M.D., VCMC Medical Director, put it this way:

... Our greatest strength is our people. The residency program and the sustaining enthusiasm of a teaching hospital with university affiliation will continue. The excellence and commitment of the supervising physi-

cians remain unchanged, and the nursing and support staffs remain competent and dedicated to excellence. Technological advancements are continuing, such as completion of our new CT scanner facility and installation of our new vascular radiology procedure equipment and our mammography unit.

Over the century of service celebrated by Ventura County Medical Center this year, the hospital has weathered many storms and survived lean times. It has responded to the ever-changing needs of each era . . .⁴¹

Meanwhile in early 1987, Ventura County Medical Center received its three-year unconditional accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), California Medical Association. The inspectors were highly complimentary about the medical care given at VCMC and the hospital's quality assurance system.

As 1987 progresses, the financial position of the hospital is steadily if slowly improving, with billing and collections being brought current, and projections for the future brightening. At this writing, work on the long-planned remodeling of the second and third floors of the Medical Center is just beginning. The \$3.9 million project, funded by the County via Certificates of Participation, will enlarge and modernize facilities of the Surgery Department, and provide state-of-the-art private rooms and other facilities. These improvements are expected to make the hospital more competitive in the private insurance market.

This year, Staff and employees are proudly marking the Ventura County Medical Center's Centennial with the theme "100 Years of Caring." Administrator John Puryear says there is much to celebrate.

Ventura County Medical Center has traditionally been a hospital caring for all the people of the Ventura area — every walk of life, young and old, whatever their needs. The Medical Center has always endeavored to provide the most complete, up-to-date care possible. That tradition of excellence is very much alive today; it is our commitment to the future.⁴²

NOTES

¹*Ventura Free Press*, April 8, 1887.

²*Minutes*, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Book 2, pp. 217-218, Feb. 6, 1882.

³*Ventura Signal*, Oct. 9, 1875.

⁴*Minutes*, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Book 1, p. 351, Feb. 9, 1876.

⁵*Minutes*, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Book 1, p. 744, Feb. 11, 1879.

⁶*Minutes*, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Book 1, p. 325, Nov. 2 and 3, 1875.

⁷Sparks, Henry, "C.L. Bard, County Doctor," in *Ventura Star*, Oct. 19, 1936, pp. 1 and 2.

⁸*Minutes*, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Book 3, P. 181, June 6, 1887.

⁹*Minutes*, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Book 3, p. 183, June 8, 1887.

¹⁰Storke, Yda Addis, *A Memorial and Biographical History of the Counties of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura, California. Illustrated*, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1891; p. 233.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ventura Daily Vidette*, March 10, 1890.

¹³Mr. Cagnacci was more commonly known as "Uncle Ameríco," according to Nick Peirano and Ynez Rodriguez.—ED.

¹⁴Sheridan, Sol N. *History of Ventura County, California*, Vol. 2, Chicago: S.J. Clark Publishing Co., 1926; p. 120.

¹⁵*Ventura Free Press*, Oct. 18, 1918.

¹⁶*Ventura Free Press*, Oct. 25, 1918.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ventura Free Press*, Dec. 6, 1918.

¹⁹*Ventura Free Press*, Sept. 16, 1921.

²⁰*Ventura Free Press*, Aug. 5, 1921.

²¹*Ventura County Star-Free Press*, July 3, 1965.

²²The horse was called Dick and the baby was named Chester Barnett Clark. He, mother Alice, and emergency midwives Beatrice Vanegas and Zora Selby were resting comfortably when Dr. Homer and the distraught father arrived on the scene. Here is the story as told to me by Chet Clark 70 years after the fact:

In 1916 we were living in the de la Riva adobe. The Foster Park bridge had washed out — it was a bad year — and it was still raining. Before Dad left to collect the doctor, he sent Bob (age 9) and Bill (age 8) to collect Beatrice Vanegas up on Rancho Casitas and Zora Selby down at Selby's just in case he didn't make it. Then in this awful storm, Dad rode up about to the Hollingsworth place and put old Dick in the water and managed to get across the river.

He rode to Charlie Train's place and phoned Dr. Homer. Where that old barranca comes down by Train's, there was a great pile of mud across the road and when Dr. Homer came charging along in his touring car, he

crashed right into that mud slide. They got him and his bag of instruments all untangled and Charlie Train loaned him one of his work horses and they went clear up to the original Camp Comfort, below Rancho Arnaz. That's where the San Antonio comes into the Ventura River, and Dad figured the current would take them across.

Dad somehow or another got Dr. Homer and his bag of tools pretty well secured on old Dick, then headed Dick into the water and grabbed ahold of his tail. I don't remember ever hearing what became of the other animal.

When they got there, Zora and Beatrice, Mother and I were waiting for them. Zora and Beatrice had delivered me while poor old Dr. Homer and Dad were out there drowning in the Ventura River. Beatrice probably just jumped on a race horse to get there in a hurry, but I imagine Zora hitched up a buggy. I don't know how or when Dr. Homer got back across that river!—ED.

²³ *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, July 3, 1965.

²⁴ Smolt, M.D., Charles A. "A History of the Residency Program at General Hospital, Ventura County," in *Journal of General Hospital, Ventura County*, (OP), p. 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁶ *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, April 18, 1939, p. 1.

²⁷ Smolt, op. cit., p. 9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁹ *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, May 13, 1950, p. 2.

³⁰ *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, Nov. 9, 1953.

³¹ Smolt, op. cit., p. 11.

³² *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, April 2, 1979, p. A-14.

³³ *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, April 6, 1979, p. A-1.

³⁴ *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, April 2, 1979, p. A-14.

³⁵ *Ventura County Medical Center Journal*, (supplement to the Ventura County Star-Free Press) May 29, 1984, pp. 1 and 4.

³⁶ Erickson, Maggie, "Taking Care of the Sick," in *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, June 28, 1987, p. E-9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Interview of David Nolde, Health Care Agency Personnel Director, September 1987.

³⁹ "Notice of Public Hearing on Reduction of Health and Medical Care Services," June 15, 1987.

⁴⁰ Conversations with several VCMC administrative managers, July - October, 1987.

⁴¹ Edwards, M.D., Samuel R., "Hospital May Get Smaller, But Quality Won't Be Sacrificed," *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, June 28, 1987.

⁴² Interview of John W. Puryear, February, 1987.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Michael Briley was born on Oct. 30, 1938 during Orson Welles' infamous "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast. People have drawn various inferences from that, Briley says. Born and reared in the Los Angeles area, he earned the B.A. degree in history at Loyola Marymount University. After working as a newspaper reporter, Briley was a member of the University of Southern California public information staff for seven years. For the next decade-plus he was a freelance journalist, author and public relations-marketing-advertising copywriter. In February 1986, he joined the VCMC Medical Research Foundation as Community Relations Officer. He and his wife, Michele, live in Ojai with their children, Kathleen Ann, 15, and Michael Paul, 11.

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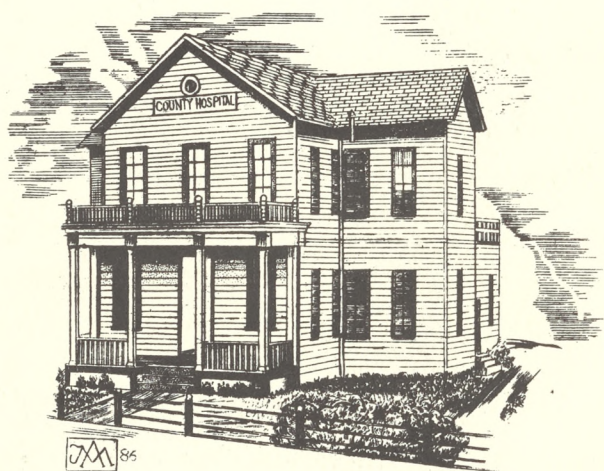
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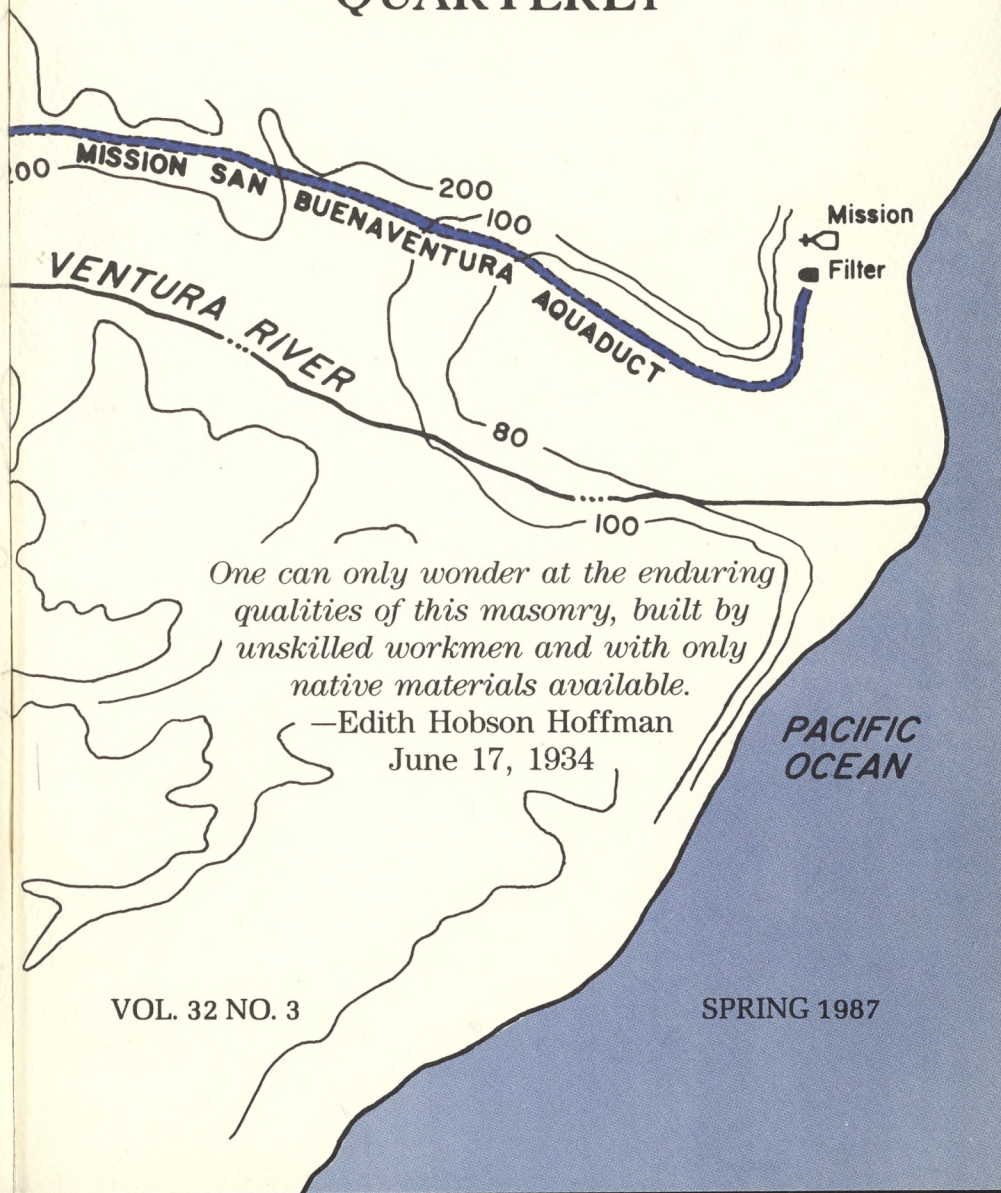
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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY



*One can only wonder at the enduring
qualities of this masonry, built by
unskilled workmen and with only
native materials available.*

—Edith Hobson Hoffman
June 17, 1934

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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Photographs on pages 4, 7, 13, 15, and 17 from the VCHM collection. Photos showing the present condition of the aqueduct taken by the author. Cover graphics by Joan Word; map from Robert Browne's "San Buenaventura Mission Water System."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my appreciation to Robert Browne of Ojai for his pioneering study of the history of the Mission San Buenaventura water system. Mr. Browne's shared understanding of the subject provided me a strong foundation for my research.

CAÑADA LARGA:
HISTORY AND PRESERVATION
OF THE
MISSION SAN BUENAVENTURA AQUEDUCT

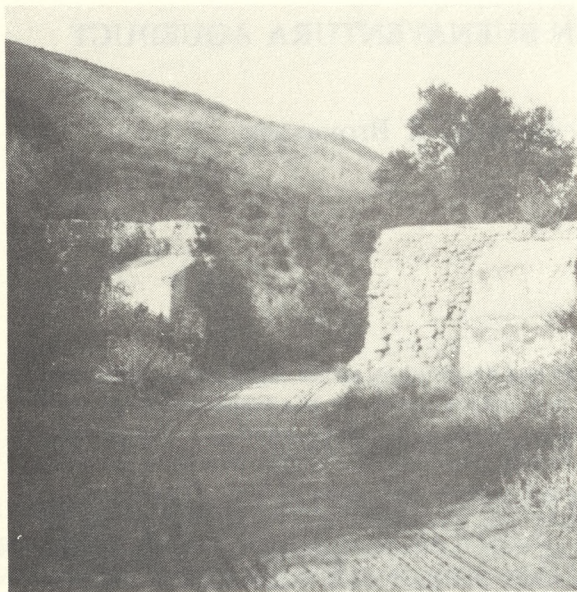
By Dorothy E. Brovarney

They are of good figure and disposition, active, industrious and inventive. Their dexterity and agility excels in the construction of their canoes made of good pine planks, well joined together and of graceful form....What is most worthy of admiration is that they have no other tools for working in wood or stone than those of flint....We pitched the camp at a short distance from the pueblo near the bank of a river the waters of which coming from the Sierra reach the sea. In the North it runs through a valley which has good lands which might benefit from the abundance of water....I named this pueblo Asunción de Nuestra Señora¹ and I hope that such a good site to which nothing is lacking will be a good mission.²

Father Crespi's early (1796) account of the land and people at what is now Ventura foreshadows subsequent development of the area as Mission San Buenaventura. Although 13 years passed between Crespi's visit as part of the Portolá Expedition and the founding of the mission,³ the padre's hope was realized. San Buenaventura succeeded not only because of "good lands" and "an abundance of water," but as a result of hard work on the part of the native population. It was Chumash "dexterity and agility" in farming the lands and channeling the river water which created the mission as a viable community.

The public is fortunate to have extant in Ventura County an artifact as testimony to this Chumash/Mission effort. The artifact takes the form of a stone aqueduct and survives as a small but significant portion of the extensive San Buenaventura Mission water system. Although it is small (just over 100 feet) relative to the miles of water channels which supported life at the settlement, the aqueduct remnant

at Cañada Larga is an imposing structure. Not only is its proportion striking but, even more impressive, is the technical accomplishment it represents. It is truly remarkable, in addition, that this sole portion of



Mission Aqueduct at Cañada Larga.

the original aqueduct remains standing intact in spite of surrounding development and without the benefit of ongoing maintenance.

The Mission Aqueduct at Cañada Larga, a National Register Historic Site and Ventura County Landmark #28, is clearly a significant structure in both Ventura County and Western American history. It is a valuable educational resource which could benefit the public if

properly presented and maintained. Any effort to accommodate visitors will require extensive planning to: first, stabilize and preserve the structure; second, create an interpretive program and last, develop the site in such a way as to offer maximum protection for the aqueduct while allowing the public reasonable access. The purpose of my report is to provide the information necessary to begin the planning process.

Research for this prospectus has involved a broad range of data which is presented topically and includes: 1. A historical account of the events and circumstances leading to the construction of the aqueduct. 2. An outline of the pattern and function of mission water systems. 3. A discussion of traditional influences in the construction of water architecture. 4. A structural description of the Cañada Larga Aqueduct. 5. Information on techniques of masonry preservation. 6. A discussion of actual and potential negative impacts and a set of recommendations to mitigate them, as well as suggestions for development of the Cañada Larga site as an educational historic resource. The appendix presents a preservation chronology, a bibliography for masonry

preservation and list of local groups with an interest in the San Buenaventura Mission Aqueduct.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As president of the Alta California Mission System,⁴ Father Junipero Serra was empowered, based on the approval of the Spanish government, to select mission sites and assign missionaries. In spite of his position of direct responsibility to the Viceroy, Serra was, at times, challenged in his decisions by the military commanders of the Spanish troops ordered to accompany and protect the padres in their exploration and settlement of California. Such was the case with the Father-President's efforts to found Mission San Buenaventura. He concurred with Father Crespi's recommendation to place a mission at the pueblo Asunción de Nuestra Señora on the Channel coast. As early as 1771, Serra's attempt to develop Mission San Buenaventura at the selected site failed as a result of emergency military needs at Mission San Gabriel.⁵ The loss of troops left the founding fathers of the new mission unprotected. Serra's subsequent endeavors to establish a religious settlement on the Channel were thwarted first by Commander Pedro Fages, then by his replacement, Captain Fernando de Rivera y Moncada and later by the first governor of New Spain, Felipe de Neve.⁶

By 1781, Governor Neve came to support the founding of Mission San Buenaventura as well as Mission Santa Barbara.⁷ On the last day of March 1782, Father Serra with the assistance of Father Pedro Cambón,⁸ founded a mission in the name of St. Bonaventure. The fact that Father Palóu describes construction of "an aqueduct to lead the water from a perennial stream,"⁹ shortly after the founding can be misleading. He is referring to little more than a crude ditch at this early stage of mission settlement. Although extensive research has revealed no documentation which specifically dates the aqueduct at Cañada Larga, it is clearly a product of later mission construction.

There are a number of sources which support the simplicity of architecture during the early mission years. In addition, there is evidence to substantiate the construction of technically complex structures from the 1790s into the early 19th century. One of the best physical descriptions of early mission development is Father Palóu's 1773 report to Viceroy Bucareli on the state of the first five missions (in existence from one to four years).¹⁰ An examination of the padre's review of these establishments reveals a consistent use of timber and tule in construction. These materials were used in four of the five churches and, more

often than not, were applied in associated buildings such as padres' and soldiers' dwellings, offices and granaries. In the case of one mission complex, and missionary quarters at another, adobe was utilized as well. Interestingly enough, Palóu mentions the availability, at each mission, of equipment for technical building. All five sites have carpenter's implements, three have mason's tools, one has a forge and bricklaying gear. Further, in the case of Mission San Antonio, the writer mentions "an abundance of stone, ordinary as well as for building and for making lime."¹¹ What each site lacks, according to the report, is workmen with trade skills. It is clear that while the Spanish government provisioned the early missions for technical development, it did not, as of 1773, provide trained personnel to fulfill this need.

The Palóu report also addresses the issue of water resources at each settlement. Of the five missions, he mentions development of a ditch in the case of only one. Arroyo water was channeled "in a ditch along the slope of the land to water a stretch of fertile ground close to the mission...."¹² At two sites, the flow of river water was undependable, rendering irrigation impossible. The missions relied on rainfall and seasonal crops for survival. The two remaining establishments had abundant water, and irrigation was a simple matter (probably requiring only a rudimentary trench). At this stage in mission growth, then, water was a resource that was either nearby and abundant, thus useful for crop irrigation; or it was nearby and scarce, resulting in a dependence on rainfall and seasonal planting. No attempts were made at this point to transport water great distances, along hillsides and over gullies. In fact, rather than transporting water to the settlement through a complex channel system when a nearby source dried up, two missions relocated closer to a dependable water site.

Despite the fact that Mission San Buenaventura was founded nine years after Palóu submitted his 1773 report, its early development typifies the situation at the first five missions. The bulk of permanent construction did not begin until the early 1790s.¹³ The point, too, must be made that Father Pedro Cambón did not supervise development of this masonry system,¹⁴ portions of which, including Cañada Larga, remain in Ventura today. Although Father Serra chose the padre to run the new mission because he was "expert with irrigation,"¹⁵ the assignment was temporary. In fact, Father Cambón resided at San Buenaventura just two months.¹⁶ Even if the materials and skilled labor were available, the missionary could hardly have overseen completion of an elaborate seven-mile aqueduct during his brief stay. Further, the pattern of early mission settlement allowed little time for such ambitious



Mission San Buenaventura, 1860s

projects. Construction of a church, a stockade and living shelters out of material on hand was the priority, along with a quick and convenient access to a water source.¹⁷ In April and May 1782, Father Cambón probably supervised the digging of open, unlined channels¹⁸ from the nearby river to fields immediately surrounding the mission.

The question remains as to when, and under whose direction, the aqueduct that includes the portion of Cañada Larga was constructed. Research has yielded no specific data; however, an estimate of the period of construction can be made based on available evidence. Because the Cañada Larga structure is a masonry product, discussion about its origin rests with the importation of Mexican artisans, particularly stonemasons, to Alta California by the Spanish government.

The first artisans came to Alta California in 1769 as part of the original Spanish expedition to settle the northern region. According to Father Palóu, this group comprised "some blacksmiths and carpenters who were going for any work that might come up at San Diego and Monterey."¹⁹ Father Serra obtained six more artisans (carpenters and blacksmiths) in 1774 as per his 1773 request to the Viceroy.²⁰ The ar-

rangement provided assignment of the artisans to centrally located missions, allowing them to serve neighboring missions as well. Their task included teaching their trade to the neophytes;²¹ for their labor they were salaried by the Spanish royal treasury.²² Other than the efforts of these skilled workers, most of the physical labor in developing the early missions was done by the soldiers, sailors²³ and neophytes.

The quality of construction at the missions in these years reflected employment of unskilled workers. The level of quality did not advance much between 1774 and 1790 as soldiers, sailors and neophytes continued as primary sources of labor.²⁴ Efforts at this time were directed primarily toward expansion of the mission system and the presidio fortifications as well as the addition of pueblo developments,²⁵ to encourage immigration and settlement. Bancroft refers to the period from 1783-1790 as the "uneventful decade," as little original construction took place. Rather, repair on existing buildings was the focus of work. In terms of new construction, the historian notes some church building but points out that these structures were not the permanent ones which survive in the 20th century.²⁶

Besides the lack of skilled labor and original construction, the sort of materials used up until 1790 is an indication of the level of building quality attained. Buildings were made chiefly of adobe, wood and tile, although Bancroft makes mention of some use of mortar and stone. Apparently the latter was limited to foundations, although a stone wall was erected at the Monterey Presidio in 1778.²⁷ The choice to utilize stronger material at the presidio reflected an increased concern for defense and the fact that presidio labor was more skilled than that of the missions.²⁸ Recorded comments from visiting foreigners serve as corroboration of the simplified form and substance of mission architecture. Both Jean Francois Galaup de La Perouse and George Vancouver noted a lack of progress and industry at mission settlements.²⁹

Beginning in the 1790s and extending into the 1820s, construction of a permanent nature took place in Alta California. The 1792 and 1795 arrivals of artisans from Mexico forever changed the appearance of the missions. Bancroft credits Governor Pedro Fages with this accomplishment because in 1790, at the padres' behest, he requested 51 artisans to serve as laborers and instructors for a contracted period of four to five years. This plan provided for total fiscal support by the Royal Treasury.³⁰ Two subsequent governors, José Joaquín de Arillaga and Diego de Borica supported artisan importations.³¹ Because the artisans were, at first, free to the missions, the padres made good use of them. Although most left Alta California by 1800,³² the stonecutters and

stonemasons had imparted enough skills to the neophytes for masonry construction to flourish at the missions.

Surviving records emphasize progress in construction of structures at the mission quadrangles, particularly churches. Neophytes, with instruction from master masons, erected stone churches at Carmel, San Juan Capistrano, Santa Barbara, San Gabriel and San Buenaventura. The arrival of stonecutters in Monterey in 1792³³ surely led to construction of a masonry facade for the church at Mission Santa Cruz in 1793. These artisans were also responsible for development of Alta California's first water-powered gristmill at the same site in 1796.³⁴ Father Fermín Francisco de Lasuén credited the beauty of the completed church at Mission San Carlos to the skills of a master stonemason.³⁵

While the padres noted advancements in church construction as well as other associated mission buildings, little documentation exists on mission water systems. In a chapter of *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, author Edith Webb presents a thorough analysis of the extant records concerning mission water development.³⁶ Her information, along with evidence from several other sources, permits an estimate of the period during which the Mission San Buenaventura aqueduct may have been constructed.

A study of Webb's data reveals the bulk of construction associated with waterworks took place between the years 1805 and 1815. Twenty structures erected at nine missions during this time included aqueducts, reservoirs, dams and mills. A period of later construction, 1819-1827, is notable but on a much smaller scale. These years saw development of four mills, two dams, a reservoir and a well at five mission sites. Early sites for water development, between 1794 and 1804, numbered four and involved two mills and two ditches. Considering available evidence, it is clear that the neophytes and padres engaged in more building activity associated with water from 1805-1815 than during any other period in mission settlement.

An examination of documents relating to San Buenaventura yields little direct information about its water system. An early source notes the area has "sufficient water for irrigation."³⁷ Governor Fages's 1787 General Report declares "its constant and copious supply of water produced more than ordinary harvests of grain and fruits."³⁸ Both the gardens and the fields favorably impressed Captain George Vancouver in 1793.³⁹ In an 1817 letter, San Buenaventura's Father José Seán worries about the mission livestock during a drought but has no fear for the crops, as they have been saved by irrigation.⁴⁰ Father Francisco Uriá

includes the following in an 1828 report: "This mission has three reservoirs,...ten orchards of fruit trees, besides vegetable gardens,...vineyards and olive groves."⁴¹ Of his 1829 visit to Mission San Buenaventura, Alfred Robinson recorded "...we walked...to the garden, where we found a fine fountain of excellent water, and an abundance of fruit and vegetables,...apples, pears, peaches, pomegranates, tunas or prickly pears and grapes."⁴²

Both the resident missionaries' comments and those of their guests support the fact that Mission San Buenaventura produced unusually successful harvests of fruits, vegetables and grain. It is clear from this information that the water system was fully developed and functional by 1828-1829 and probably by 1817. The necessity of a skilled stonemason's instruction disallows any construction date before 1792 for the raised masonry portion of the aqueduct at Cañada Larga. Based on Vancouver's report of destruction of Mission San Buenaventura by fire, Zephyrn Englehardt speculates building began on a new masonry structure in 1792.⁴³ Father Lasuén indicates the stone church was half finished early in 1795.⁴⁴ The fact that the church wasn't completed for another 14 years (1809) supports the possibility that a master mason was on site during the early years, perhaps between 1792-1795. It is possible that the mason whose name appears in the Account Book of the Santa Barbara Mission for the years 1795 and 1801-1802, advised San Buenaventura's neophytes.⁴⁵ Both slow construction and the return of most artisans to Mexico by 1800 tend to rule out the presence of a mason in the later years of church construction. A missionary's 1810 comment about efforts to complete the church reinforces the theory: "This is truly a Roman undertaking, especially for our neophytes."⁴⁶

The speculation that Buenaventura enjoyed the services of a master mason in the mid-1790s also supports Englehardt's contention that a mill building was erected in 1802.⁴⁷ A mill required careful planning in order to channel water to power the operation. The mission mill was generally built in conjunction with a reservoir or dam to control the flow. In turn, the reservoir or dam was connected with an aqueduct.⁴⁸ In order for the entire operation to run efficiently, masonry would have been the choice building fabric.

The historic data surrounding the development of Mission San Buenaventura points to an aqueduct construction date within the years 1792-1815. Given that completion of the masonry church took about seventeen years, it is likely that construction of the seven-mile aqueduct also took a period of years. If Englehardt's date of 1802 is cor-

rect, it is likely that the aqueduct dates close to the turn of the century. If, on the other hand, the mill was built later, as were the ones at nearby Santa Barbara (1827), Santa Ynez (1820) and San Gabriel (1820), as well as San Luis Obispo (1805-2nd) and San Antonio (1806), the aqueduct may have been completed during the period of heavy mission construction between 1805 and 1815.⁴⁹ An additional piece of the aqueduct puzzle may lie with the building of the adobe chapel, Santa Gertrudis, near Cañada Larga. Although Francis Weber dates the chapel at 1808, Englehardt states only that it was under construction at the same time as the mission church.⁵⁰

THE PATTERN AND FUNCTION OF MISSION WATER SYSTEMS

The pattern and function of mission water systems has been best documented by archaeological examination. Other helpful sources include firsthand historic descriptions and later accounts. John Ressler relies on all three for his analysis of the mission water systems of New Spain.⁵¹ Ressler takes a broad, yet clear and informative approach to Spanish irrigation on the Northwest Frontier.

The writer cites three major components of mission water control: the dam, the reservoir and the *acequia*. He also explores several features commonly found near the mission quadrangle. Early dams of brush construction and those of earthfill functioned simply for diversion; however, later masonry structures fulfilled several functions: diversion, storage and lift power.⁵² The impervious and permanent nature of masonry structures made them preferable to early earthen structures. Ressler describes two types of masonry: mortared stone and mortared tile. Mortared stone was more common in massive projects as the tile required more labor in the form of fired-brick production. Both types involved the use of lime kilns to manufacture mortar.⁵³ A flood gate at one end of the dam opened to the water source; at the opposite end, a tile and slab outlet box faced the aqueduct.⁵⁴

Man-made reservoirs took two forms: raised above ground and dug below ground. Raised reservoirs were usually of masonry, while the tank type could be dirt or plaster-walled.⁵⁵ All reservoirs served to impound water, but for a variety of purposes. Some powered grist mills, others functioned as short-term storage for field irrigation, and still others served as a domestic source for daily mission needs.⁵⁶

Ressler defines *acequia* as an open water channel for the purpose of water conveyance. *Acequias* were either lined or unlined. Unlined

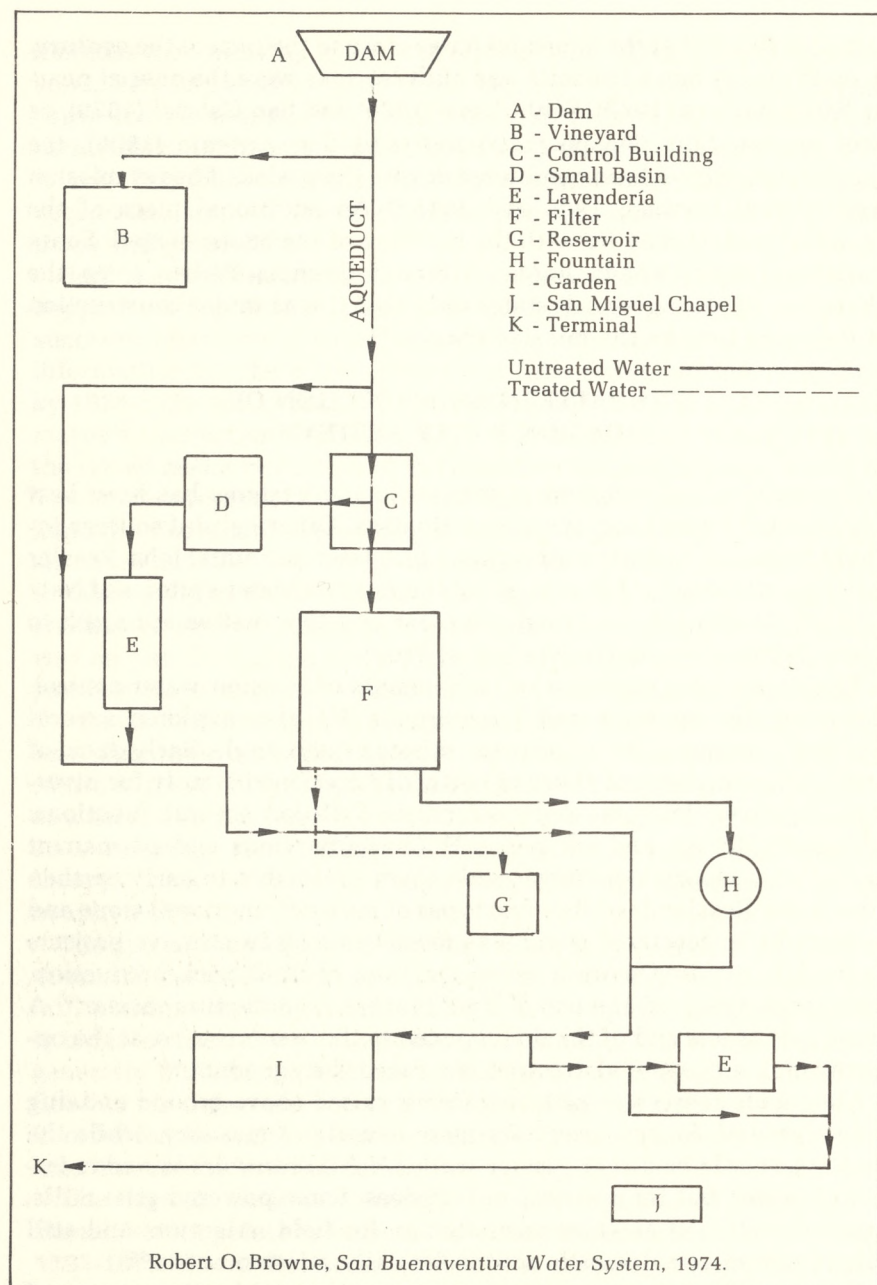
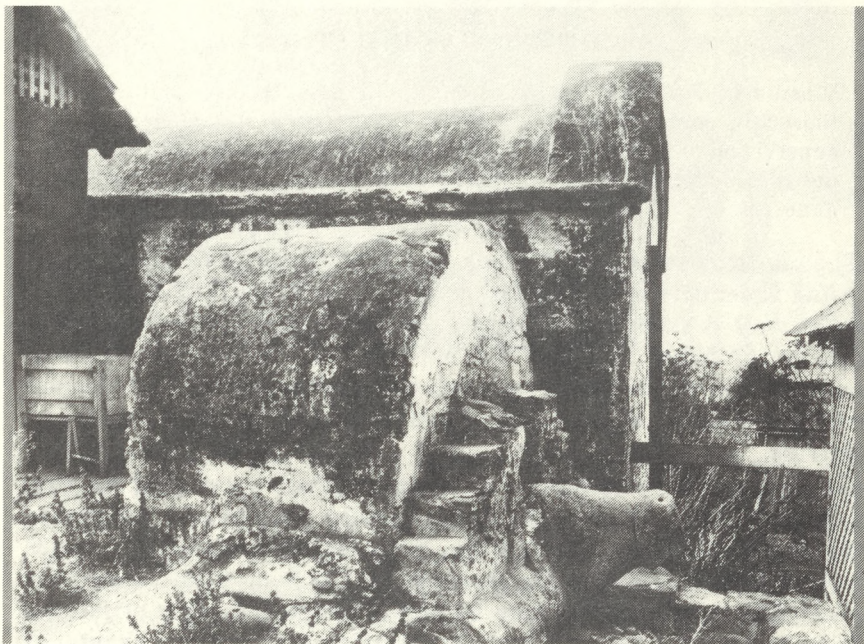


Diagram of Mission Water System

ditches characterized the earliest mission efforts to divert water. To prevent seepage, the missionaries began to line the *acequias* with either unmortared stone or brick or mortared stone or brick.⁵⁷

Ressler distinguished *acequias* from aqueducts. Aqueducts stood as physical extensions of *acequias*, had smaller channels and served more specific functions. Aqueducts, commonly constructed of masonry, were either raised (as Roman aqueducts) or ground-level. Raised types required the strength of mortared rock or brick for support. Ground-level systems involved piled rock or were carved out of existing stone. Both types were commonly lined with tile and plaster.⁵⁸ A third type of mission water conveyance, which Ressler calls a conduit, functioned like a pipeline. Conduits were closed, generally subterranean channels made of either clay pipe or tiles. The advantage of the conduit rested in its ability to produce pressure, an obvious need since the mission quadrangle stood on level ground. Con-



El Caballo: Water Settling System West of Mission San Buenaventura. Aqueduct water passed into the building in foreground, then through a mesh screen into the larger filtration building. Unfiltered water, for use in Mission gardens or perhaps the lavandería, passed out the mouth of the sandstone horse head; hence, the name: "El Caballo."

duits generally supplied fountains and were characteristic of more sophisticated water uses.⁵⁹

Structures at the mission quadrangle or immediately adjacent include fountains, *lavanderías* and filters. Fountains functioned for both decorative and utilitarian purposes. Usually constructed in association with a trough, fountains spouted water for domestic purposes such as drinking, washing and bathing. *Lavanderías* or laundry pools took the form of a masonry trough adjacent to and supplied by a fountain. From the *lavanderías*, water was channeled to the fields. Filters took a variety of forms but all functioned to clarify standing water by allowing sediments to settle out.⁶⁰

This summary of part of Ressler's study only begins to explain the water network characteristic of mission development. Suffice it to say, the aqueduct occupied an important position in early California's complex water system.

ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE

When a building has a magnificent appearance, the expenditure of those who control it is praised. When the draftsmanship is good, the supervision of the works is approved. But when it has graceful effect due to the symmetry of its proportions, the site is the glory of the architect.⁶¹

The construction of the Cañada Larga Aqueduct, like other raised mission aqueducts, reflects missionary interest in traditional architecture, as well as skill in engineering and stonemasonry. While the missionaries probably required the expertise of the engineer and/or stonemason in actual construction, it can be argued that they gleaned basic knowledge of masonry construction from their study of Vitruvius.

De Architectura was written in Latin by Vitruvius during the first century B.C. Edith Webb notes that a Spanish translation appeared in 1787 and is still to be found at the Santa Barbara Mission Library.⁶² There is little doubt that the writings of the Roman influenced the padres. The facade of the Santa Barbara Mission Church is strikingly similar to a temple design Vitruvius describes in the second chapter of Book Three. The altar at San Buenaventura Mission Church has an ornate, yet classical appearance. The columns appear to combine the Ionic and Corinthian orders.

In addition to his books on architectural details and styles, Vitruvius devoted part of his treatise to structural elements and construction

methods. His description of masonry, with particular reference to aqueducts, probably aided the missionaries in creation of efficient water channels. Vitruvius's use of fine detail provided the reader with a working knowledge of the subject.



Mission San Buenaventura, Front Altar

The writer explains masonry in terms of its composition and manufacture. Book Two includes sections on stone, sand, lime and the manufacture of mortar. He advises on the structural advantages and disadvantages of both river sand and quarried sand. A recipe for mortar includes differing proportions of lime and sand, depending on the type of sand available. Vitruvius, in an interesting explanation, reveals the purpose of the burning process in the preparation of lime for mortar:

And so when lime receives water and sand and the strengthens the structure, the following seems to be the cause: just as other bodies, so also stones are blended of the elements. And those which have more

air are soft; more water, are pliant from the moisture; more earth, are hard; more fire, are more fragile. Therefore if stones of this last quality are crushed before they are burnt, and mixed with sand, and thrown into the work, they do not become solid, nor can they hold the building together. But when they are thrown into the kiln, they are seized by the violent heat of the fire and lose the virtue of their former solidity. Their strength is burnt out and exhausted and they are left with open and empty pores. Therefore when the moisture which is in the body of that stone, and the air, are burnt out and removed, and the stone retains the remaining latent heat, on being plunged into water (before it recovers power from fire), the moisture penetrates into the open pores, and it seethes and thus, being cooled again, it rejects the heat from the substance of the lime. Thus, moreover, whatever weight the stone possesses when it is thrown into the kiln, it cannot answer to that when it is taken out; but when it is weighed, the bulk remaining the same, it is found to lose about one-third of its weight when the moisture is burnt out. Therefore, when the pores and attenuations of the lime are open, it catches up into itself the mixture of the sand; thus it coheres and, as it dries, joins with the rubble and produces solid walling.⁶³

Book Eight, chapter six of *De Architectura* provides direction for the development of water systems. Vitruvius addresses three methods of conveyance: channels, lead pipes and earthenware (tile) tubes. This discussion reads like a blueprint for mission water architecture:

In the case of channels, the structure must be on a very solid foundation; the bed of the current must be levelled with a fall of not less than 6 inches in 100 feet. The channels are to be arched over to protect the water from the sun. When they come to the city walls, a reservoir is to be made. To this a triple receptacle is to be joined, to receive the water; and three pipes of equal size are to be put in the reservoir, leading to the adjoining receptacles, so that when there is an overflow from the two outer receptacles, it may deliver into the middle receptacle. From the middle receptacle pipes will be taken to all pools and fountains.⁶⁴

The composition and style of the San Buenaventura Mission Aqueduct at Cañada Larga testify to the influence of Vitruvius and the importance of classical architecture in the world of Spanish California.

A STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION: CAÑADA LARGA AQUEDUCT

It was of rubble construction, covered practically throughout, and wound its seven miles of stone body picturesquely along the base of

the chain of foothills like a Gargantuan snake, crossed creeks, deep barrancas and wide arroyos and finally poured forth its treasure where the mission snuggles in the lap of the Mount of the Cross.⁶⁵

The Cañada Larga portion of the San Buenaventura Mission Aqueduct rests on an acre site adjacent to Cañada Larga Road at the distance of four miles from the mission and downtown Ventura.⁶⁶ The county-owned property is situated approximately one quarter-mile east of Highway 33 and is bordered on the west by a stream. It was this stream which builders crossed with the aqueduct. The channel originated from a dam probably between one and two miles north at the junction of San Antonio Creek and the Ventura River.⁶⁷

The remaining structure consists of two masonry fragments (see Plate 1A) which total an approximate length of 100 feet. A 12-foot gap between fragments resulted from a turn-of-the-century blast for the purpose of creating a road.⁶⁸ The portion to the northwest is shorter in length; it measures approximately 20 feet. The longer fragment, largely



Plate 1A.

"So solid after a century and a half that dynamite was used to blast the way through for a road."

covered with vegetation, allows only a rough estimate of 70 feet in length (see Plate 2A). The height of the aqueduct ranges from 10 feet at the northwest end to just under two feet at the southeast corner of the

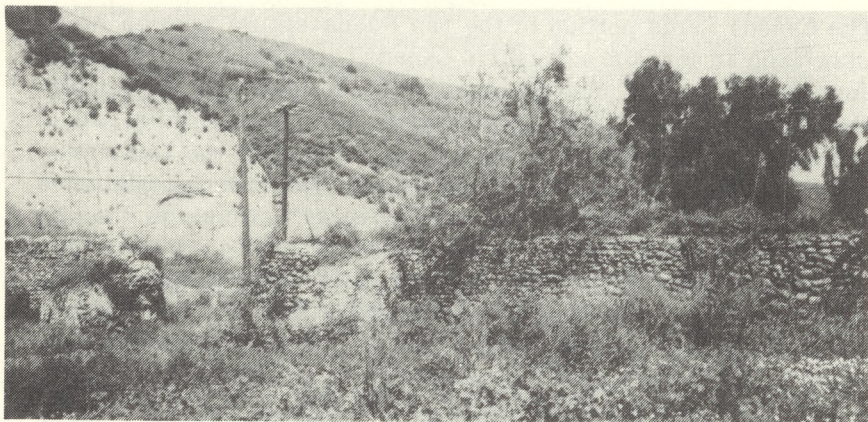


Plate 2A.
Longer fragment of aqueduct, approximately 70 feet.

property (see Plate 2B). The decline in height of the structure toward the southeast is necessary to maintain the established gradient as the surface of the land rises. According to a computation by Roberta Greenwood and Nicholas Gessler, the gradient between Cañada Larga and Weldon Canyon (the adjacent canyon to the northwest of Cañada Larga where aqueduct fragments existed until 1968) was $(68.5-67.7)/(400)$ or $.8/400$ or $.2$ cm. per meter.⁶⁹ This figure indicates a slight drop in gradient. Von Blon observed a uniform fall which he believed "insured a constant easy flow of 1000 inches - perhaps more."⁷⁰

The aqueduct is actually a stone and mortar (random rubble) wall supported on both sides by two massive buttresses. These supports, also of masonry construction, are six feet wide and range in thickness from four and a half to almost seven feet. Probably as a strengthener, the builder applied a very thick ($1\frac{1}{4}$ - $3\frac{1}{4}$ inch) coat of plaster to the buttresses. The fact that of the four buttresses, three maintain approximately 70-100 percent coverage, is testimony to the durability of the application. Although reapplication probably occurred, it is questionable whether it has been done in the past 100 years. In this regard, however, it is interesting to note the distinction between the buttresses attached to the northwest fragment (see Plates 3A-B). The buttress on the south side (Plate 1A) resembles the composition of the wall (with the

exception of the plaster layer) and the two buttresses on the south-east fragment (see Plate 3C). The buttress on the north (Plate 3B), however, appears much like modern concrete. Reference to the historic photographs in this report yields little information as the perspective in each case is from the south. Perhaps, discovery of a historic photo taken from a different angle will shed light on the mystery in the future. Consultation with a geologist or engineer could confirm if the material is modern concrete. But at this time, the question of the significant variation remains unsolved.

The focal point of this mass of masonry is the water channel it supports. At Cañada

Larga, the aqueduct is a covered system. The channel itself is approximately 10 inches deep and 30 inches wide. These dimensions are measurable (although with difficulty due to plant growth) at the road cuts and the northwest end. Additional evidence for the width of the waterway rests with a view from the top of the structure (see Plate 4A). The masonry forms a clearly defined border around the capping material. The view also illustrates the approach to surfacing the channel by mortar sections. Figure 3A depicts the upper portion of the southeast face of the fragment. It is clear from the photograph that the channel was covered with successive layers of mortar. There is embed-

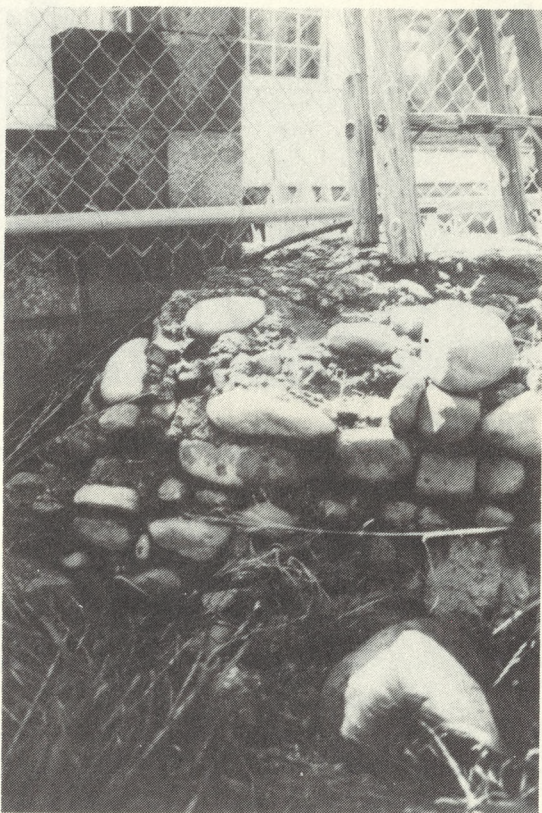


Plate 2B.

Lower portion of aqueduct on SE corner of property.



Plate 3A.

Buttress attached to south side of aqueduct.

asked is why there is multiple layering of the cap material. Still another unresolved issue is why the masonry is flush with the cap surface on the south side but not on the north (see Plate 4A).

The longevity of the Cañada Larga Aqueduct, and the fact that it represents tremendous engineering skill in its time and place warrants community effort to preserve it. In addition, its historic value to California mission life establishes it as an educational resource worthy of interpretation.



Plate 3B.

Buttress attached to north side of aqueduct.

ded rock in the center of the channel, presumably to support the capping. An earth-filled area mid-structure was the open channel at one time. Greenwood and Gessler question whether the capping or "core," as they refer to it, was cast in place above the channel or if it was cast separately in blocks and mounted over the channel.⁷¹ A second question to be

MASONRY PRESERVATION

Masonry consists of stone, mortar and often a layer of plaster. An examination of characteristics of each element will allow discussion of

preservation for each. Much of this information appears in the National Trust Columbia University edition, *Introduction to Early American Masonry*.

Determination of the type of stone in question is important because each has distinctive properties which determine how well it will wear, how resistant it is to moisture, heat, etc. Structural problems with masonry evidence themselves in any of the following ways: cracking, uneven settlement, bulging or deterioration of stone or mortar. Breakdown in the stone itself is a high risk in polluted areas.

Surface breaks and erosion in stone can occur as a function of efflorescence. Efflorescence appears as a powdery deposit or crystallized layer on stone when it has absorbed water. If the stone contains soluble salts, they will be carried to the surface in the form of salt crystals as the water evaporates. Also, the movement of



Plate 3C.

Two buttresses on southeast fragment of aqueduct.



Plate 4A.

View from top of aqueduct showing width.

ground water up through a wall (rising damp) results in the same condition because ground water contains salts. Besides its unsightly appearance, efflorescence is a form of erosion. Dirty surfaces, in particular, attract moisture and aggravate the problem.

In repair, the recommended course of action is to refill weathered-out joints. In this case, care must be taken to match the original mortar. Damaged stone can be removed, replaced and mortared similarly. Current expertise in stone conservation advises **against** traditional techniques of sand-blasting and steam-cleaning as both damage stone. Mechanical and chemical cleaners are also discouraged, as well as treatment with water repellents.

Mortar serves two functions: to fill voids between stones and to make the wall watertight. Soft mortar, a lime-sand combination, predominated construction until 1880 when hard mortar, or cement, was introduced. The advantage of soft mortar was that it allowed relative movement of the stones; flexibility compensated for uneven settlement. If hard mortar, modern cement, is applied to a soft-mortared structure, stones will break and joints will pull open. For these reasons, it is essential that the composition of the mortar in historic structures is studied and duplicated in any repair work.

Deterioration of mortar is treated with the same techniques preferred for stone damage. Refilling joints, or "repointing," with appropriate mortar is the method of choice. Before repointing, all loose and deteriorated mortar should be removed and joints should be raked out by hand to one inch.

Plaster is used to cover surfaces in order to render them resistant to wind and rain. It also provides a clean, uniform finish. The components of plaster are similar to those of mortar; proportions are controlled variously depending on intended use. An interesting observation, in light of this report, is the substitution of shells for limestone in the process of making plaster. With Ventura's coastal location, it is certain that shells were a common source of lime.

In terms of restoration, damaged plaster must be patched or replaced with a substance which matches the original as closely as possible. Concerns in matching are for proportions of mix, texture, density and appearance.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Examination of the condition of the Cañada Larga Aqueduct reveals that several forces are resulting in negative impacts to the structure.

These forces include moisture and plant growth.

The moisture has caused: 1. Efflorescence of some stone surfaces. 2. Softening and decay of some mortar joints. 3. Growth of moss, lichen and other types of fungus. The damage from efflorescence does not appear, in general, to be serious. Mortar softening occurs more commonly in the upper portion of the structure. Softening is apparent in both the texture and coloring of the mortar. The soft mortar has a dark grayish brown, almost black color. In spite of this mortar decay, the stones seem fairly secure. Growth of moss and lichen is particularly obvious on the buttresses; perhaps because these have more exposed surface area than the wall, they absorb more moisture.

Rising damp may be the source of lichen and moss growth. Interestingly, there is no evidence on the wall surfaces of rising damp. In fact, the mortar toward the bottom of the structure is dry and hard (and in contrast to the soft, has a light brown color). Perhaps the interior is subject to rising moisture. It is difficult to tell, although one might expect to see some evidence, such as uneven settlement.

Mitigation of impacts due to water seepage is difficult because, even if rainwater is eliminated, rising damp can cause the same problems. The preferred treatment in this instance is repointing. A mortar analysis is essential to insure a close match in the new treatment. A geochemist should be consulted for this process. If some stones are considered unsightly due to erosion and/or alkali crystallization, removal may be warranted. Replacement, however, should be done on the advice of a geologist. Care should be taken in selection of stones to match in size, texture and color. A geologist can recommend replacement stone with the best water and weathering resistance. Replastering exposed surfaces is another solution to moisture seepage from rainwater. Again, a chemical match is recommended. In the case of the aqueduct, the buttresses are clearly plaster-treated. It is questionable whether or not the stone wall surfaces were likewise treated. In spots there seem to be remnants of plaster; if coating was applied it certainly was not layered as thickly as that on the supporting masonry. Before any repointing and replastering, surfaces require cleaning. For references to washing stone and mortar surfaces, see Appendix B. The rule of thumb in masonry conservation is "the simpler the process, the better." Many traditional treatments do more damage in the long run than the problems which they attempt to correct.

The second major impact on-site, and one that serves to aggravate the moisture problem, is the growth of a variety of plants in, on and around the aqueduct. This situation is particularly serious in terms of

the southeast fragment. More than half the construction is densely covered by vegetation, including a prickly pear cactus, a rosebush, a pyracantha, at least one tree and numerous shrubs and vines. As previously mentioned, lichen and moss growth is also a problem but primarily involves the buttresses.

Plant removal is advisable for several reasons. First, elimination of the flora will reduce the tendency of the masonry and surrounding ground to retain moisture. Second, although the density of the brush prevents confirmation of this, it is likely that the aqueduct has incurred structural damage due to root incursion. Third, clearing the growth will expose these areas and allow the dampness accumulated from years of shade to dry out. A botanist and biochemist are the best resources for this procedure. A botanist can identify the plants and their patterns of growth and particularly advise on root growth. A biochemist should make recommendations and monitor plant reaction. (The geochemist may have suggestions as to the best method of plant removal in light of the masonry.)

In terms of the above-mentioned mitigations, it is necessary to have a preservation consultant, stone conservation or preservation architect with a working knowledge of 19th century masonry, on site to monitor procedures.

There are several potential impacts to the site which deserve mention. The first, plant eradication, while a mitigating procedure in and of itself, also presents possible negative impacts. This issue has already been addressed; suffice it to say, chemical treatment presents risks and should only be undertaken with sufficient knowledge and great care.

A second anticipated impact is that of future landscaping of the site. Consideration should be given to the use of drought-resistant plants in order to minimize water in the area. An additional advantage is their low-maintenance requirement. Low-profile plantings will focus attention on the site's major feature — the historic aqueduct. All plants should be placed at a reasonable distance from the structure, in order to prevent any future interference.

A third impact also connected with site landscaping is choice of surfacing for unplanted areas. Selection will obviously involve decisions about site accessibility and usage; regardless, non-plant ground cover should be compatible in appearance to the historic structure. Examples of appropriate surfaces include cobblestone walks (with attention to matching the aqueduct stones in color, texture and size) and compacted earth surfaces to convey the simplicity of early California.

Any sort of paving applied should be separated from the structure to avoid creating moisture retention at ground-level nearby.

A fourth potential impact involves a plan to develop a dump site in a nearby canyon. Although the plan has yet to be formally submitted,⁷² it is worthwhile to consider future impacts now. If the operation entails frequent trips by large trucks past the site, negative impacts are inevitable. Air pollution levels will increase and promote deterioration of the stone. Specific chemical emissions result in preservation problems. Another impact of regular truck passage will be vibration. Whether this poses a threat to the aqueduct's stability is unclear and a subject for future research.

Rather than present a blueprint for park development at Cañada Larga, I have instead attempted to develop a set of guidelines for preservation. In addition, my emphasis on historical context provides a wealth of information useful for interpretation. As such, the report is offered both as a resource and as a catalyst for public involvement in the process to preserve the Mission San Buenaventura Aqueduct.

APPENDIX A **PRESERVATION CHRONOLOGY:** **CAÑADA LARGA AQUEDUCT**

Date:	Event:
1792-1815 (estimated)	Aqueduct constructed.
December 1812	Earthquakes damage church and mission buildings; no mention of aqueduct repair.
January 1821	Earthquake; no mention of aqueduct damage. Floods (perhaps associated with the earthquake) require building repair; no mention of aqueduct repair.
June 1846	Mexican government sells Mission land, including improvements, to José Arnaz.
1861-1862	Aqueduct is washed out by floods of winter storm; falls into disuse.
1871	Santa Ana Water Company purchases Mission water rights; uses aqueduct reinforced with plank conduit.
1900 (estimated)	Hole blasted through aqueduct to accommodate road.
June 1934	Daughters of American Colonists, Mrs. Walter H. Hoffman, Ventura Chapter Regent, mark aqueduct with bronze plaque. (Information provided by Bob Browne—ED.)
1937	Mr. and Mrs. Mort Eddy purchase property.
1958	Mrs. Walter Hoffman urges Ventura County Supervisors to preserve aqueduct.
1959	Ventura County Historical Society attempts to buy aqueduct property; proves too costly.

- 1967 Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board forms; preservation of aqueduct top priority.
- 1968 Heritage Board attempts designation but County Supervisors decline in deference to objections of Mrs. Potts. Mrs. Celia Potts with option to buy property, promises to "save" aqueduct by incorporating it into landscaping decor for patio of planned restaurant. (Plan fails for financial reasons, ownership of property to Norman Elton and Merrill Lorenz.)
- August 1972 Heritage Board again attempts designation and fails due to owner protest.
- Local landowners south of site petition for access to Cañada Larga Road. Extension road would destroy aqueduct. County Supervisors deny petition.
- February 1973 Heritage Board declares aqueduct County Landmark #28 without owner consent.
- Owners respond with threat to alter or remove aqueduct.
- March/April 1973 Heritage Board recommends County purchase aqueduct.
- March 1975 Aqueduct declared a National Historic Site.
- 1976
(estimated) Lemon orchard surrounding aqueduct removed.
- 1977
(estimated) Site fenced to combat vandalism.
- Heritage Board discusses plan to develop site as park; county landscape architect (Walt Barrows) draws up plans. Submitted and approved by County Supervisors but funds fall through (as of March 1986, County cannot locate plans).

- May 1984 Brochure highlighting aqueduct suggested. Not developed.
- July 1985 Plans projected for large dump site in adjacent canyon pose threat to preservation of aqueduct.
- April 1986 Report on history and preservation of Cañada Larga Aqueduct submitted to Ventura County Property Administration.

APPENDIX B

LOCAL GROUPS AND RESOURCES

American Water Resources Board
City of Ventura Parks Department
 Paul Leitzell, Historical Interpretation
 Richard Senate, Arbinger Archaeological Museum
 David Stewart, Recreation/Interpretation
County of Ventura
 Kay Martin, Archaeologist, Planning Department
 Ginny Morton, Property Administration
Robert Lopez, Archaeologist
Ojai Museum
 Bob Browne, Curator
Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens
 Jim Blakely, Caretaker
Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation
 Dick Whitehead
Ventura County Archaeological Society
 Myrle Kirk
Ventura City Heritage Commission
Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board

PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

Bob Browne
Todd Collart, Ventura County Planning Department
Mary Louise Days, City of Santa Barbara Planning Department
Pat Ellison
Roberta Greenwood
Myrle Kirk, Ventura County Archaeological Society
Austin Kline
Caroline Kuizenga, Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens
Mary Monahan, Ventura County Planning Department
Ginny Morton, Ventura County Property Administration
Paul Leitzell, Ventura City Parks Department
Richard Senate, Ventura City Parks Department
Pandora Snethkamp, U.C.S.B. Archaeology
Judy Triem
Father Virgilio, Santa Barbara Mission Archives
Dick Whitehead, Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation
Alberta Word, Ventura County Historical Society

NOTES

¹Also called La Assumpta.

²Fr. Zephryn Englehardt, O.F.M., *San Buenaventura: The Mission By the Sea* (Santa Barbara: The Schauer Printing Studio, Inc., 1930), p.p. 7-8.

³*Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴Alta (Upper) California was the area from the San Diego Mission northward, assigned to the Franciscan Fathers. Baja (Lower) California had been settled by the Jesuit Order.

⁵Fray Francisco Palóu, O.F.M., *Historical Memoirs of New California*, Ed. Herbert Eugene Bolton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1926).

⁶Englehardt, *San Buenaventura*, p. 12.

⁷Englehardt attributes Neve's support to a devious plot of the governor to implement his own version of the mission system (one that severely limited the power and influence of the padres), with San Buenaventura functioning as the first settlement under the new system. Neve's scheme never came to fruition.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹Palóu's *Life of Fray Junipero Serra*, Ed. Maynard Geiger (Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), p. 222.

¹⁰Palóu, *Memoirs*, 3:213-238.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹³Englehardt, *San Buenaventura*, p.p. 24-25.

¹⁴Several sources include this erroneous assertion, perhaps beginning with J. L. Von Blon in "The Ancient Aqueduct of San Buenaventura," published in *Touring Topics*, October 1932. Von Blon's misstatements (that the masonry aqueduct was "built almost immediately after the founding of the mission by Fray Junipero Serra in 1782" and that "the task in its entirety was performed under the direction of Fray Pedro Cambon") are cited elsewhere in the literature: Roberta Greenwood and Nicholas Gessler, "The Mission San Buenaventura Aqueduct with Particular Reference to the Fragments at Weldon Canyon" (Pacific Coast Archaeological Society), 4:62-63 and Robert D. Browne, *San Buenaventura Mission Water System* (Ventura County Archaeological Society, 1974), p. 7. Construction is attributed to "Pedro Campon" (sic) in a 1982 Historic Resources Inventory form prepared for the Vince St. portion of the Ventura Mission Aqueduct (a surface section lined with stone, brick and stucco within city limits) by Robert Lopez. Even Ventura County's National Register nomination form for the Cañada Larga portion mentions Father Cambón's involvement and assigns a range of years for construction beginning in 1782. Most unfortunate is the sign at the Mission San Buenaventura Water Filter in the City's Eastwood Park which dates the building "1782" and credits Father Cambón with direction of labor in its construction. The filter is part of the more elaborate aqueduct system of later construction.

¹⁵Palóu, *Memoirs*, 4:217.

¹⁶Englehardt, *San Buenaventura*, p. 132.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 16

¹⁸John Q. Ressler, *Spanish Mission Water Systems, Northwest Frontier of New Spain*, Master's Thesis (University of Arizona, 1966), p.p. 80-81. Ressler makes a distinction between lined and unlined water channels. He argues that early mission ditches were unlined but later were improved by the addition of one of three types of lining.

¹⁹Palóu, *Memoirs*, 2:17.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 3:126.

²¹Neophytes were those Indians who had been converted and baptized in the Church.

²²Palóu, *Memoirs*, 3:126.

²³*Ibid.*, 3:68. The provisional regulation of 1773 allowed sailors to serve in field cultivation upon arrival in Alta California.

²⁴Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of the Pacific States of North America* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company, 1884), 18:618.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 18:279-425. Between 1774 and 1790, the missions increased from 5 to 11, the presidios from 2 to 4, and 2 pueblos were created.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p.p. 388, 453.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.p. 331, 463.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 613.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p.p. 436, 529.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 615. The Royal Treasury withdrew financing in 1795.

³¹*Ibid.*, p.p. 540, 658.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 615.

³³Fr. Lasuén to José Arguello, November 27, 1792, in *The Writings of Fr. Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, Ed. Fr. Finebar Kinneally (Academy of American Franciscan History, V. 1, 1965).

³⁴Bancroft, *Pacific States*, p. 497.

³⁵Fr. Lasuén to Margues (sic) Branciforte, November 18, 1795, *Writings*.

³⁶Edith Buckland Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions* (Los Angeles: Warren F. Lewis, 1952), Ch. 8, 12.

³⁷De Croix to Galvez, August 26, 1782, #910 in Junipero Serra Collection, Santa Barbara Mission Archives.

³⁸Englehardt, *San Buenaventura*, p. 19.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁰Fr. José Seán to Governor Sola, January 2, 1817, *The Letters of José Seán: 1796-1823* (San Francisco: John Howell, 1962).

⁴¹Englehardt, *San Buenaventura*, p. 66.

⁴²Alfred Robinson, *Life in California* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), p. 50.

⁴³Englehardt, *San Buenaventura*, p. 24.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.p. 24-25 (Fr. President Lasuén's report to the government, March 11, 1795).

⁴⁵Webb, *Indian Life*, p. 130 (Webb's research shows José Antonio Ramirez assisted in construction of churches at Santa Barbara, San Gabriel, San Luis Rey).

- ⁴⁶Señán letter of April 5, 1810, *Ventura Free Press*, March 26, 1972.
- ⁴⁷Englehardt, *San Buenaventura*, p.p. 25-26.
- ⁴⁸Farnham, Thomas J. in *Fabricas*, Ed. Elisabeth L. Egenhoff (*California Journal of Mines and Geology*, 1952), p. 62.
- ⁴⁹Webb's records show no aqueduct development after 1816.
- ⁵⁰Francis J. Weber, O.F.M., *A History of San Buenaventura Mission*, p. 53; Englehardt, *Buenaventura*, p. 26.
- ⁵¹Ressler, *Spanish Mission*. For a more specific examination of California's mission systems, see Webb, Ch. 8.
- ⁵²*Ibid.*, p.p. 65, 67-69.
- ⁵³Vitruvius on *Architecture*, Trans. and Ed. Frank Granger (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), 1:97-98; Ressler, *Spanish Mission*, p.p. 69-70.
- ⁵⁴Ressler's detailed description of p. 71 is based on a study of the San Diego Mission Dam made by F. E. Green in the 1930s.
- ⁵⁵Detailed description, Ressler, p. 75.
- ⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 78.
- ⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p.p. 78, 80, 81.
- ⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p.p. 82, 83.
- ⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p.p. 82-86.
- ⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p.p. 86-95.
- ⁶¹Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 2:58-59.
- ⁶²Webb, *Indian Life*, p. 143.
- ⁶³Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 1:99.
- ⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 2:181-182.
- ⁶⁵Von Blon, "The Ancient Aqueduct," p. 22.
- ⁶⁶Portions of the acequia east of Ventura Avenue were recently excavated; the report is available at Ventura County Historical Museum.
- ⁶⁷In his 1974 report, Robert Browne argues that a dam on the creek was more logical than on the river; the creek is less turbulent and still exhibits a natural dike near the junction of the two flows. *San Buenaventura Water System*, 1974, and "The Old Cement Flume," *Ventura Free Press*, February 28, 1902.
- ⁶⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹Greenwood and Gessler, "Weldon Canyon," p. 74. The Weldon Canyon fragments were part of a study done for the State of California preliminary to the construction of Highway 33.
- ⁷⁰Von Blon, "The Ancient Aqueduct," p. 23.
- ⁷¹Greenwood and Gessler, "Weldon Canyon," p. 73.
- ⁷²Todd Collart, Personal Interview, February 27, 1986.
- Editor's update, January 1988:
- Mr. Collart, Supervisor, Special Projects Section, Planning Division, County of Ventura, reports that a formal proposal for the Weldon Canyon site has been submitted by Waste Management of California and is presently awaiting an Environmental Impact Report. He has asked that Ms. Brovarney's paper be forwarded to him so that it may be included in the EIR.

Mr. Collart prefers that the project be referred to as a sanitary land-fill or disposal site rather than dump site, the latter term inferring an unregulated, uncontrolled, unsupervised facility.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dorothy Brovarney, M.A., is at the beginning of what promises to be an interesting career. Presently, she is working for the City of Monterey, developing programs, exhibits and outreach material to introduce school children to Monterey's historic Colton Hall Museum. She surveys and documents historic buildings for the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Department of Monterey as well. *Cañada Larga: History and Preservation of the Mission San Buenaventura Aqueduct* was written by Dot for the County of Ventura while she was a student in the Public History Program at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

ERRATA

Vol. 32 No. 1

Page 2

For

Rosena Kitchen

Fauvette Rollison

Read

Rosena McConica

Fauvette Rollyson

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Note 12

The land for the Ventura County Government Center was sold by Albert Thille, younger brother of John.

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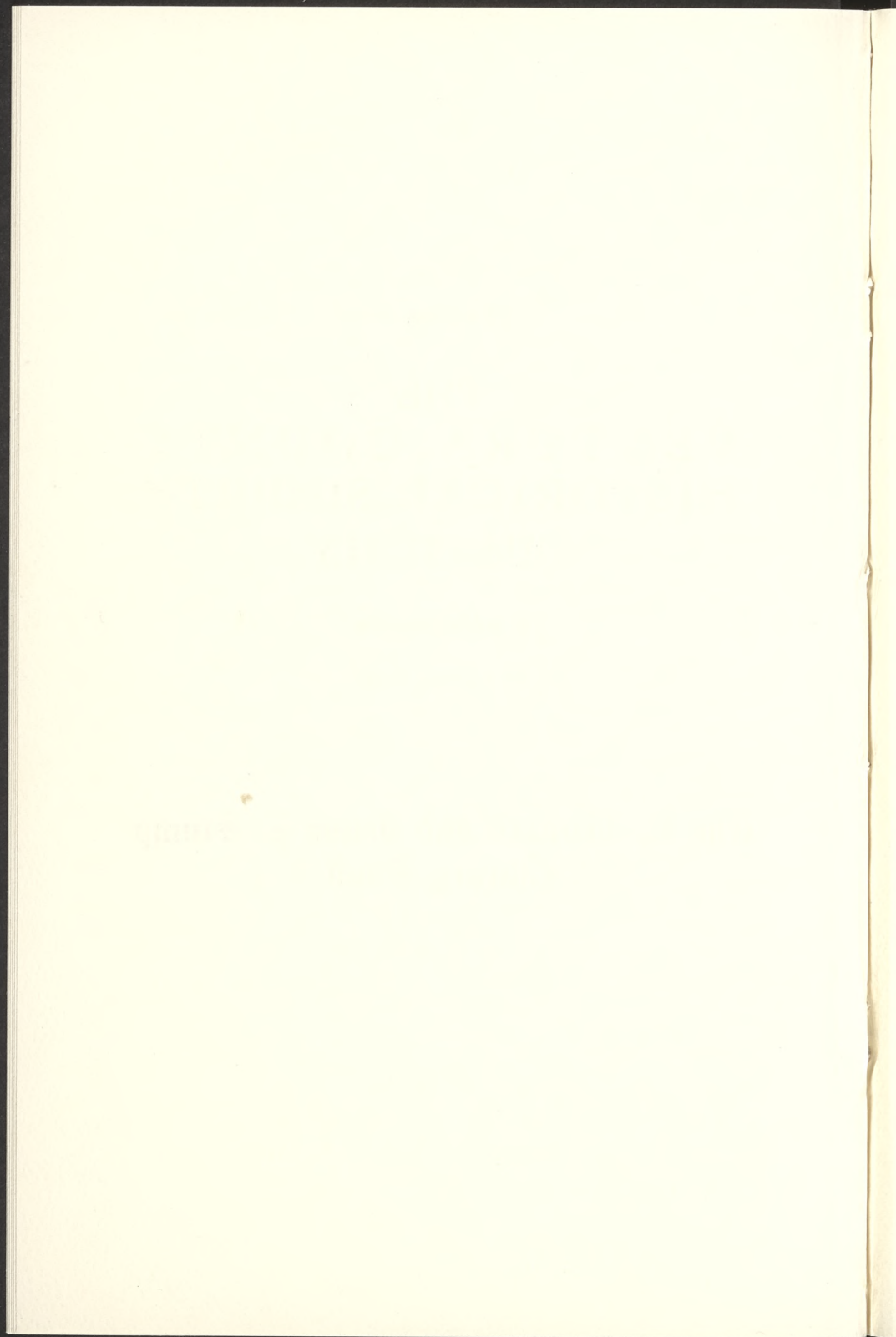
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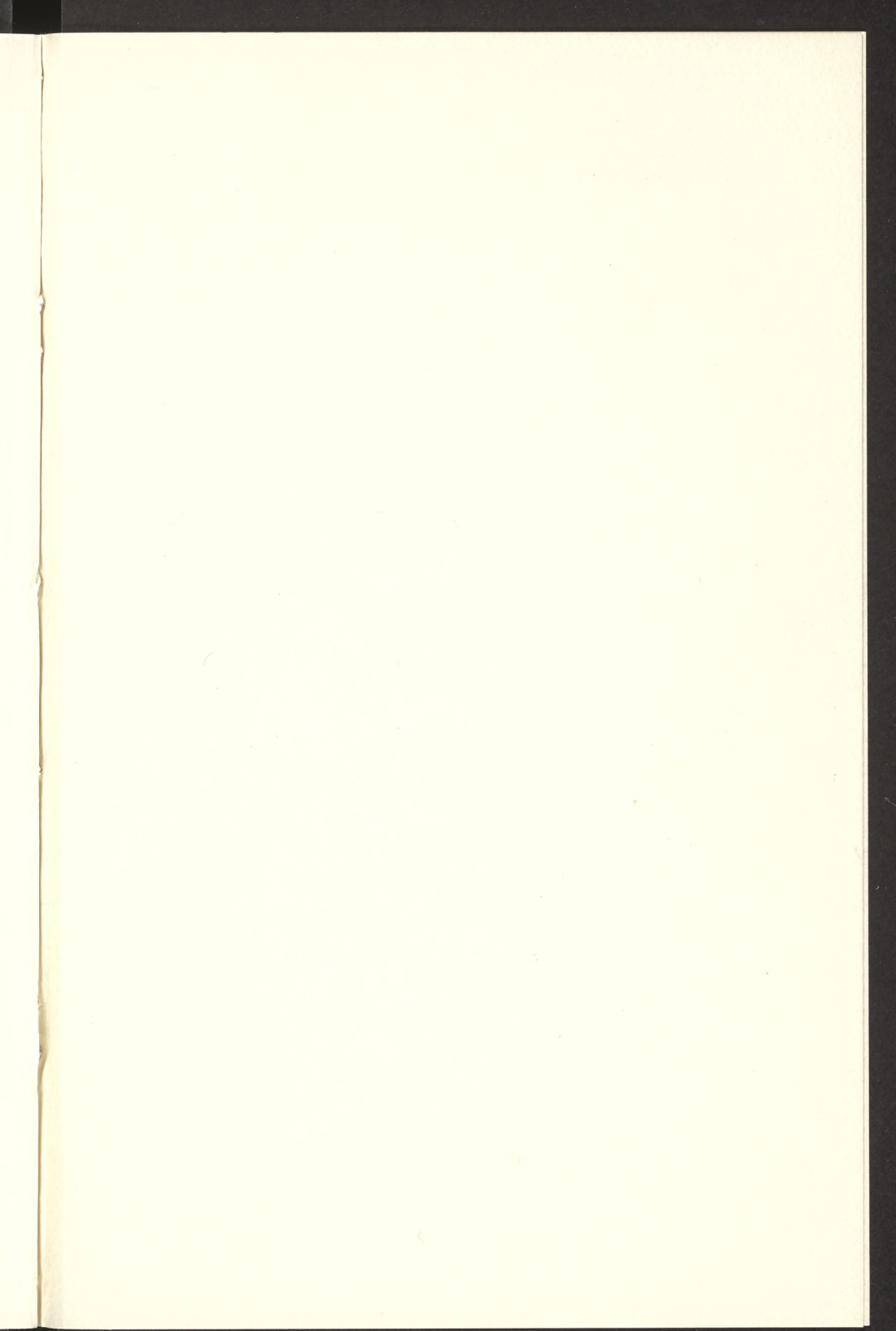
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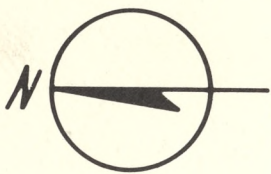
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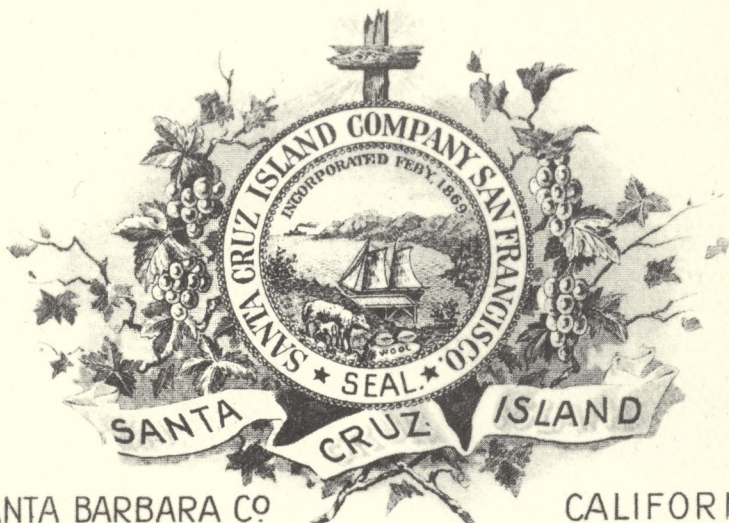
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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Cover photograph by David Hill from
a label provided by Helen Caire.

Photographs in Miss Caire's article
are from the Frederic Caire family
collection unless otherwise indicated.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Miss Caire is becoming well known to our readers. Previous contributions to our Quarterly include: "A Brief History of Santa Cruz Island from 1869 to 1937" (Vol. 27 No. 4); "Island Roundups and Shearing" (Vol. 31 No. 4). This granddaughter of Justinian Caire, director of a French savings bank in San Francisco; and, by 1880, sole owner of the island of Santa Cruz, has fond memories of her summers on the island. Her memories are our doorway to the most beautiful of yesterdays on the island time forgot.

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND VINTAGE

By Helen Caire

All through the dog-days the grapes are swelling. With autumn, the clusters are ripening well: in the Cañada del Medio, up to the undulating foothills of the Colorados, the southern boundary of the central valley, symmetrical bright green, row-upon-row, stretching eastward more than half-way to the Sur. At last, the vintage season has arrived.



Santa Cruz Island Foundation

Longtime Caire Employee, Pete Olivari, Plowing Vineyard

Westward from the Main Ranch, vineyards spread on the lower reaches of the northern range for some distance toward the Cascada. Hiding the fence of the Burgundy district, high

above the creek bank of the Cañada del Medio, a thick hedge of wild roses once bloomed; their delicate flowers, pale pink in spring, flame in thick clusters of round, orangy-red hips in autumn. The healthy vines flourish.

In planning diversified operations on his Santa Cruz Island ranch, Justinian Caire judged the climate and soil particularly favorable for the cultivation of wine grapes. Many years later, Carl Bremner, a geologist, would agree: soil close to the surface contains the minerals and other nutrients necessary for grape vines. Records of The Santa Cruz Island Company of 1885 list statistics for selected vine stock from France: Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Petite Sirah, Malbec, Cantal, Mataro, Barbera, Hock, and, in 1893, Zinfandel. Of the whites, there were Muscat Frontignan, Riesling, and Chablis. These were so labeled. Later, the red wine (with the exception of Zinfandel and Hock) was labeled "Burgundy," following the Californian habit of the times of using the generic appellations.



Justinian Caire



Albina Cristina Sara
(Mrs. Justinian) Caire

The Phylloxera...destroyed 75 percent of France's vineyards between 1860 and 1890 and ravaged all other countries of

Europe. It laid waste seventy-five thousand acres in California as well...Not until the mid-1890s was it brought under control.¹

Providentially, the insect did not cross the Santa Barbara Channel to Santa Cruz Island, so Justinian Caire's 600 acres of vineyards were spared. Aunt Delphine Caire's expression became very serious when she talked of the Phylloxera. Educated in Paris at the time the scourge was raging, the convent schoolgirl must have received a deep impression of the agonizing concern of the French for their previous vineyards.

Wild hogs proved to be the problem on Santa Cruz Island. During harvest time, their trips into the central valley increased substantially. Even though the long fences had been inspected, some of the hogs managed to break into the vineyards while the grapes were ripening and during the vintage. The hunter set out each evening to guard the grape harvest through the night, a gun or long lance in hand, a knife at his belt, and a dog or two running happily along, scouting among the vines. In years when the hogs were prolific, he returned frequently with a snout or two. From my grandfather's time, there was a bounty on each nose brought in; wild hogs damaged not only the vineyard, but corn and grain fields, and the ecology as well.

Long before Prohibition, *carros* drawn by strong teams (later, trucks) headed back and forth between the upper winery and the districts



Partially Loaded Cart in the Field

where the pickers were working. The lavishly stained boxes, filled with mounds of grape clusters over which hovered yellow jackets, were emptied to fill the ravenous maw of the crusher. Then, empty, they were carted off to be refilled.

Though the vaqueros and some other workmen were Barbareños (Mexicans from Santa Barbara), most of the employees were Italians. Many of the latter who came to the United States at this time were field hands and skilled vine dressers, so during the vintage their number was increased. A Santa Barbara News-Press item discovered by Stella Haverland Rouse notes the following:

October 8, 1911

The island schooner SANTA CRUZ came over yesterday....

She sailed again this morning with a crew of 20 men to handle the grape crop on the island and work in the winery.

Years later my sister, Jeanne, in a professional capacity, met an elderly Frenchman. Of course, she could not recognize him, but he recognized her surname and told her that long ago he had been cellar master "*à l'île*." Though an expert in his field, he was unemployed. Prohibition, then the Depression had ruined him.

The two winery buildings were built of red bricks, made and fired on the Island. The upper winery stood on a low hillside a short distance above and behind the lower one, the fermentation cellar. During the vintage the usual quiet of the winery was shattered when the crusher did its work. The juice was funneled into gigantic tanks. A wide plank was laid across the full tanks. A workman holding a long-handled plunger walked along the board to stir the must. After a few days, it was funneled down by gravity flow into the vats in the fermentation cellar.

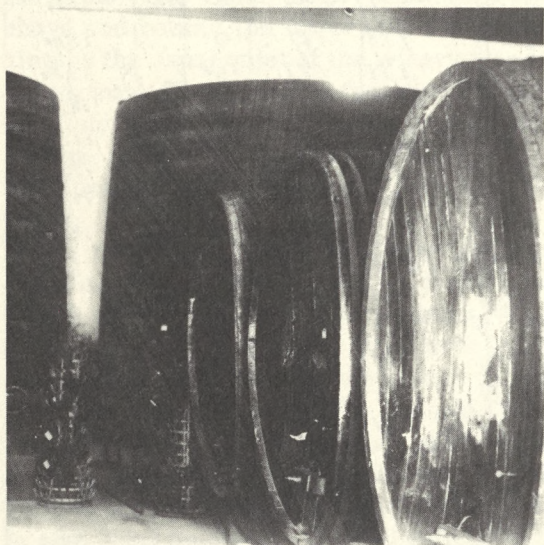
The cellar opened on the Camino del Este, leading eastward out of the Main Ranch. The six heavy, double doors, painted brown, were nearly always closed at other seasons. When my father was showing friends around, he opened a small door in one of the large doors. Entering the long, deep interior, we used to follow with "scary" delight. The dark interior backed into the hillside. The flashlight disturbed long shadows which closed in on all sides when the light was quenched. Daylight, slanting through the small door, soon disappeared. We slipped around the huge vats and oak casks, so old we looked at them in awe. They held about 100,000 gallons or more. There was an echo in the cool darkness, repeating our words and footfalls on the cement

Date of Shipment	Conveyance	Packages	Quantity or Capacity	Quality	Value
1896					
February 26	Schooner to P. H. B.	1 Bl. x. 203	50 gal	Good	1891
" 26	"	1 Bl. " 249	50 "	"	"
" 26	"	1 Bl. " 244	51 "	"	"
" 26	"	1 Bl. " 263	50 "	"	"
" 26	"	1 Bl. " 249	50 "	Burgundy	1892
" 26	"	1 Keg. " "	10 "	Alfalfa	1891
March 7	"	1 Bl. " 232	51 "	"	1891
" 12	Schooner to P. H. B.	1 Bund. " 119	168 "	Good	1891
" "	"	1 " " 104	160 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 148	166 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 168	168 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 223	165 "	"	1892
" "	"	1 " " 164	170 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 194	168 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 245	167 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 231	159 "	"	1893
" "	"	1 " " 188	167 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 253	167 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 176	168 "	"	"
" "	"	1 " " 220	168 "	Burgundy	1894
" "	"	1 " " 142	170 "	"	1893
" "	"	1 " " 146	168 "	Burgundy	1894
" "	"	1 " " 285	170 "	Wine	1894
March 18	Schooner to P. H. B.	1 B. " 290	50 "	"	1895
" 1	"	1 " " 224	51 "	Good	1891
" 1	"	1 " " 252	50 "	"	"
" 1	"	1 " " 271	50 "	"	"
" 1	"	1 " " 246	49 "	"	"
" 1	"	1 " " 228	50 "	"	"

From the Santa Cruz Island Company's "Vintner's Book."



Main Ranch, Santa Cruz Island. The two winery buildings are at the left.



Oak Casks in Santa Cruz Winery.

floor. As children, being in the wine cellar was for us something like — not quite so exciting — but something like being in the Painted Cave.

The wine was bottled at the Island, though some was shipped in barrels. The labels, whose pleasing design Arthur J. Caire directed, bore The Santa Cruz Island Company seal: surmounted by a rustic cross for Santa Cruz, a circle bearing

the name of the corporation encloses a sketch of Island activities — the schooner SANTA CRUZ, sails set; headlands breasting the channel; a ewe and lamb standing near wool sacks. On either side are leaves and clusters of grapes.



Full Barrels, "Ready to Load" at Prisoners Harbor Wharf

Rider's California includes this statement:

The island [Santa Cruz] is said to have a peculiar bouquet not to be found in mainland wines.³

As for the exceptional quality of the wine, Leon D. Adams, the eminent wine authority, writes:

Santa Cruz Island... was renowned before Prohibition for the

prize-winning grapes grown there by the late San Francisco importer and hardware merchant, Justinian Caire.²

The heirs of Justinian Caire continued wine operations until Prohibition forbade it.

To digress a moment in lighter vein — in connection with the discarded residue of the grapes, my father related a hilarious incident. Once a number of the domestic hogs had a meal on the lees of the grapes. The result was the most humorous caricature of thoroughly stoned human beings he had ever seen. Sitting at the head of our long table, he liked to describe and mimic the drunken antics of various hogs, relating them to their human counterparts — the quarrelsome ones squealing and biting; the reeling ones weaving around on tipsy trotters; one or two off by themselves, the sullen sots; the mumbly fellows grunting in befuddlement. My father's take-off of the squealing, grunting, zigzagging, bumping-in-blind-staggers of a bunch of boozy Duroc Jerseys was so vivid that our laughter must have shaken the pulley chain of the lamp hanging over the center of the table.



"It always seemed as though the long, dreamy days would last forever."

When, at length, the vineyards give up all their fruit and the winery is quiet once more, there comes, morning and evening, the suggestion of a cold snap in the air. Shadows become longer and more slanting as the sun swings more to the south. The vine-

yards flaunt scarlet, maroon and gold as if a constant carnival were in progress.

It always seemed as though the long, dreamy days would last forever — the vintage was a beautiful season — gone now — and not even the lees of the grapes nor their royal purple stains are left.

NOTES

¹Teiser, Ruth and Harroun, Cathering, *Winemaking in California* (McGraw-Hill: New York, 1983), p. 99.

²Adams, Leon D., *Wines of America* (Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1973), p. 285.

³"Peculiar," in this instance, meaning particular or individual. Rider, Fremont, *Rider's California: A Guidebook for Travelers* (MacMillan: New York, 1925), p. 570.

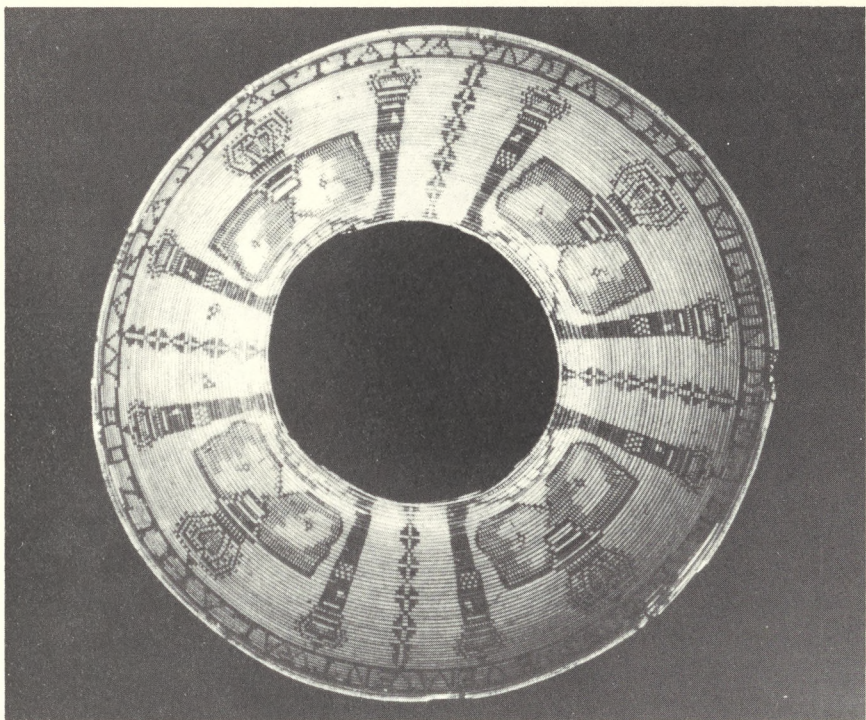
A FOURTH CHUMASH INSCRIBED BASKET WITH A DESIGN FROM A SPANISH COLONIAL COIN

by Lillian Smith

One can only imagine the elation felt by Eleanor Tulman Hancock when this amazing piece of California history came to her attention in the summer of 1985. The piece is amazing because it is a fifteen-inch diameter, bowl-shaped Chumash basket with an inscription by the basket maker and a design from a Spanish colonial coin, making it one of a group of only three previously known inscribed baskets bearing designs from Spanish colonial coins. Three museums across the nation each boast a basket of this type — the Lowie Museum at Berkeley, the Museum of the American Indian in New York, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (figures 1-5).¹

The importance of the piece lies in several factors: its place in California history, the inscription which adds a new name to the list of previously known basket makers, its relationship to the three other inscribed baskets bearing similar coin designs, and the increasing awareness of the influence of the Spaniards on Chumash basketry. It is in Chumash baskets with inscriptions, Spanish names, and designs from Spanish colonial coins that we find the most obvious influence of the Spaniards on Chumash basketry.

When it seemed that Alta California could no longer be held by discovery alone for the King of Spain, the Spaniards began a chain of missions in California. Five missions were established on Chumash land between 1772 and 1804, the first founded just three years after the overland expedition of Portolá in 1769. It was at this time that a new period began for the Chumash Indian people, a time referred to as the mission period. Franciscan missionaries began to draw Indian neophytes into the mission system; and upon them, they thrust their own economic system within their self-contained religious communities. It was a time when the skills of the Chumash basket makers became interwoven with mission industrial life. Letters of José Señán of Mission San Buenaventura relate that baskets of the Chumash basket makers were among the items sent to markets in Mexico.² Baskets, age-old products of Indian hands, brought profit to the mission community.



VCHM

Figure 1: *ELEANOR TULMAN HANCOCK BASKET (Interior View)*
Bowl-shaped basket, Chumash, Mission San Buenaventura. Fifteen inches in diameter, 4½ inches high. Sewn with up to 290 stitches per square inch. Materials: sumac, juncus. Design reproduced from globe dollar four times on main body of basket. Remnants of flicker quills at rim of basket not seen on other baskets compared in this article, but flicker quills are reported for other Chumash baskets.

The skilled hands and special knowledge of the Chumash basket makers were ever-present in the scheme of Chumash life, and subsequently in mission life. According to Luisa Ygnacio, consultant (1913) to John Peabody Harrington of the Bureau of American Ethnology, the Indian people made baskets at a place called *aknepmu'u*, providing a variety of sewn baskets that became standards as a result of craft specialization.³ Among the standards were the flat-bottomed, flaring-sided boiling baskets represented by the Lowie inscribed basket (figure 3) and the tray-shaped baskets represented by the Santa Barbara and Museum of the American Indian baskets (figures 4, 5). Like the



Figure 2: ELEANOR TULMAN HANCOCK BASKET (Side View)
Bowl-shaped basket, Chumash. Fifteen inches in diameter, 4½ inches high, Mission San Buenaventura. Materials: sumac and juncus. Sewn by Maria Sebastiana, Indian of the mission.

three baskets with which it is compared, the bowl shape of the Tulman Hancock basket is also one of tradition. Chumash bowl-shaped baskets are repeatedly present in museum and private collections.

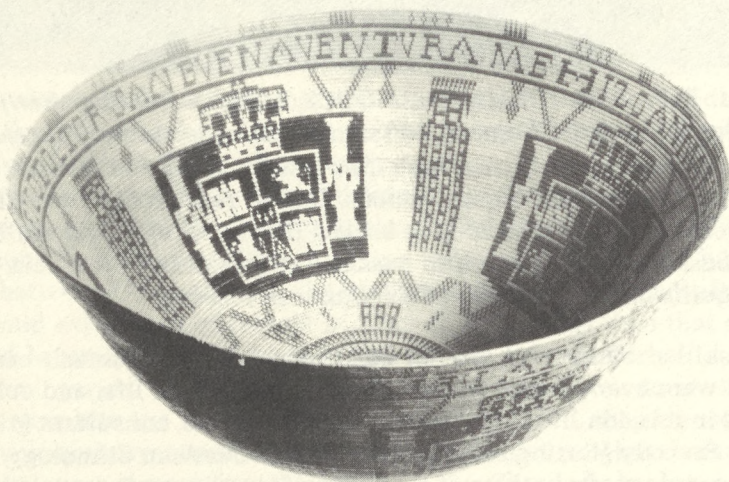


Figure 3: LOWIE MUSEUM BASKET

Flat-bottomed, flaring-sided basket, Chumash, Mission San Buenaventura. Materials: sumac and juncus. Sewn with up to 320 stitches per square inch. One of two known inscribed baskets whose inscriptions mention Mission San Buenaventura.

Tulman Hancock basket is unique, in this respect, among the baskets with designs from Spanish colonial coins.⁸

The Spaniards vested a great interest in the land of the Chumash, a land that approximated the present-day counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura, and included the four northern channel islands. It was prime land whose western limits were easily defined by the shores of the Pacific Ocean. To the east, the land seemed to melt into the territory of the friendly Yokuts Indian people and other tribes to the south. The locations of the Spanish missions outline an imaginary cross on Chumash land — Mission San Luis Obispo at the top, Purísima and Santa Ynez at the arms, Mission San Buenaventura at the base, and Mission Santa Barbara at the cross-joint. Of the five missions, Mission San Buenaventura is mentioned in the inscriptions of two of the four baskets with designs from Spanish Colonial coins. Not only is Mission San Buenaventura mentioned in both inscriptions, but the phrasing of the inscriptions is almost identical.

The inscription of the Tulman Hancock basket reads: "*María Sebastiana Yndia de la Mision de el Serafico Dr. Sn. Buenaventura la hizo.*" Translated, it is simply phrased: "María Sebastiana Indian of the Mission of the Seraphic Doctor San Buenaventura made it." Similarly, the inscription of the Lowie basket reads: "*María Marta neofita de la Mision de el Serafico Doctor San Buenaventura me hizo an.*" The inscription of the Tulman Hancock basket, while true to the form and placement of the inscription of the Lowie basket, is much harder to read since the maker creatively used the stem of one letter to form the beginning of the following letter. Moreover, the use of the words "*Yndia de la Mision*" as opposed to the use of the words "*neofita de la Mision*" ("neophyte of the Mission") clearly define the status of the basket maker, and are an important factor in the selection of the María Sebastiana of the Tulman Hancock basket from the other María Sebastianas whose names appear in the Baptismal Records of the Mission San Buenaventura.

The Tulman Hancock basket allows us to add a new name to the list of previously known Chumash basket makers. María Sebastiana, maker of the Tulman Hancock basket, was baptized into the mission by Fr. Antonio de Vitoria on October 29, 1807, at the age of 36. Her baptismal entry number is 2428 and she was from the village of Mupu. While the name María does not precede the name Sebastiana in the baptismal entry number 2428, it does precede the name Sebastiana in the Mission San Buenaventura Clothing Distribution Records of 1806-1815. Both records are for the same person, a fact supported by

the appearance of her Indian name, Suatimehue, in both places.

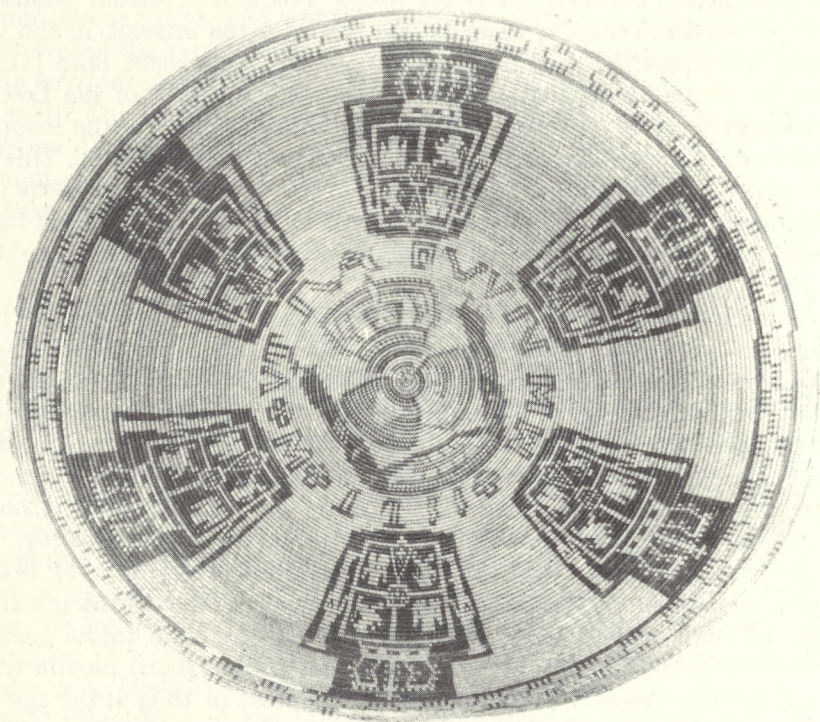
It is most likely that María Sebastiana had a working relationship with the mission prior to being baptized into the mission system, sewing baskets before 1807. Her apparent working relationship prior to being baptized is evidenced by the words "*Yndia de la Mision*" ("Indian of the Mission") used to describe her status at the mission in the inscription of the Tulman Hancock basket. By comparison, both Juana Basilia of the Santa Barbara basket and María Marta of the Lowie basket are termed "*neofita*" ("neophyte") of the mission in the respective inscriptions of the baskets with which they are associated. This is an important distinction, suggestion that the work of María Marta on the Lowie basket and the addition by Juana Basilia to the Santa Barbara basket were accomplished after they had been baptized into the mission system.⁹

The death of a María Sebastiana, age about 70, is recorded by Fr. Cura on September 19, 1854, in entry number 1041 of the Mission San Buenaventura Burial Register. If this is the entry for María Sebastiana who was baptized at the age of 36 in 1807, then there is a discrepancy of thirteen years between her age at baptism and at death. In some mission entries the priests recorded the words "*como de edad de*" ("about the age of"). While this is not so for María Sebastiana's entries, such wording would have served as an explanation of the discrepancy.

If we compare the dates for María Sebastiana (entry number 2428) with those of Juana Basilia, the basket maker who sewed the inscription of the Santa Barbara basket (figure 4), the time frame seems appropriate both for her and for María Sebastiana. Juana Basilia was baptized in 1806 at the age of about 24 and died in 1838 at the age of about 56.¹⁰ The third basket maker whose name appears in the inscription of the Lowie basket (figure 3) is María Marta, baptized by Fr. Dumetz of Mission San Buenaventura at the age of about 21 on June 5, 1788. No record of her death has been located.¹¹

All of the baskets under consideration, the Lowie, Santa Barbara, Museum of the American Indian, and Tulman Hancock baskets, have designs from one or both of two different Spanish colonial coins known as the pillar and two-globes dollar (figures 6, 7).¹² The Tulman Hancock basket, like the Lowie basket, has the design from a Spanish colonial coin repeated four times about the main body of the basket. Unlike the design taken from the pillar dollar seen on the Lowie basket, the design on the Tulman Hancock basket is reproduced from the Spanish colonial globe dollar. The Tulman Hancock basket is, in fact, the first inscribed basket to emerge with the design reproduced

from the globe dollar sewn about the main body of the basket. Because the bottom of the Tulman Hancock basket is missing, we will, perhaps, never know if the basket maker chose, or was directed, to sew a design



Museum of the American Indian

Figure 5: MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN BASKET

Shallow, tray-shaped basket, Chumash. Ventura, California. Sixteen inches in diameter. Sewn with up to 300 stitches per square inch. Materials: sumac, juncus. Design from pillar dollar repeated six times.

from a pillar or a globe dollar there, as was done with the Santa Barbara and the Museum of the American Indian baskets.

The Santa Barbara and Museum of the American Indian baskets have previously been noted for their striking similarity,¹³ most notably the execution of the pillar dollar design reproduced on a dark background and the cross-tipped "pillars of Hercules" associated with the

Figure 6: SPANISH COLONIAL COIN, PILLAR DOLLAR
 Enlarged to show details of the coin's design which has been reproduced on three of four known inscribed Chumash baskets. The representation of the crown of the king of Spain is bordered by the "pillars of Hercules." Centrally located on the coin is a shield of arms.
 (From the Eleanor Tulman Hancock collection.)



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Figure 6



Figure 7

Figure 7: SPANISH COLONIAL COIN, GLOBE DOLLAR
 Enlarged to show details of the design. Design has been repeated about the main body of the Eleanor Tulman Hancock basket four times. It also appears at the bases of the inscribed baskets belonging to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (figure 4) and the Museum of the American Indian (figure 5).

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centrally located two-globes design. Since the design on the main body of the Tulman Hancock basket is that of the two-globes dollar, it is, necessarily, compared with the two-globes designs at the bases of the Santa Barbara and Museum of the American Indian baskets. The Tulman Hancock basket has a truer rendering of the "pillars of Hercules" found on globe dollars than either the Santa Barbara or the Museum of the American Indian baskets, as is evidenced by the better representation of the crowns atop the two pillars. The rendering of the two globes on the Tulman Hancock basket also differs from that of the Santa Barbara and Museum of the American Indian baskets. It is not likely, therefore, that María Sebastiana, maker of the Tulman Hancock basket, also sewed the Santa Barbara and Museum of the American Indian baskets.

In the case of the Santa Barbara and Lowie baskets, records show that both baskets had been returned to the United States from Mexico where they had been taken in 1822.¹⁴ The Tulman Hancock basket was a possession of a well-established family of New Mexico.¹⁵ Even the lack of a bottom was not sufficient to sweep it away in the dust of another time and another culture. One time treasured new, the basket is now treasured for its place in the basketry tradition of the Chumash.

Archibald Menzies documented Chumash baskets bearing "Arms of Spain" and long inscriptions in 1792, just ten years following the founding of Mission San Buenaventura in 1782.¹⁶ María Marta, maker of the Lowie basket, was baptized at the mission in 1788, just six years after its founding. Nineteen years later, in 1807, María Sebastiana was baptized at Mission San Buenaventura. If the inscribed baskets with designs from Spanish colonial coins were made during the basket makers' tenure at the mission, then these basket types were made over a very long time-span, leading us to examine the question of commemorative pieces.¹⁷ Were they a tribute to the kings of Spain at some designated time, or pieces designed simply to make salable products to help support a community so far removed from supplies in Mexico?

While the Lowie basket with the design from the pillar dollar repeated four times and the Santa Barbara basket with the same design repeated seven times lead us to explore the idea that the baskets may have noted the successions to the throne of Carlos IV and Fernando VII, the Tulman Hancock basket, whose designs are from the globe dollar, cannot be equated numerically with Felipe V, Fernando VI, or Carlos III, kings who reigned during the milling of globe dollars from 1732 until approximately 1773. Neither could the basket have been sewn on

or about the specific dates of their successions to the throne since the dates precede the founding date of the Mission San Buenaventura.

Like the Museum of the American Indian basket whose design reproduced from the pillar dollar is represented six times, and similarly cannot be equated with Carlos III, Carlos IV, or Fernando VII, the Tulman Hancock basket is also an anomaly, and more so, since its main body design is taken from the globe dollar.

On February 25, 1987, Eleanor Tulman Hancock personally delivered the inscribed basket sewn by María Sebastiana to personnel at the Ventura County Historical Museum where it remains on loan, displayed in the Native American Gallery of the museum. It has been returned to the land of its birth.

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NOTES

¹The reader is referred to an earlier article published in *American Indian Art Magazine*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Summer 1982, "Three Inscribed Chumash Baskets With Designs From Spanish Colonial Coins," in which the author discusses the three previously known inscribed baskets.

²Simpson, Lesley Byrd, *The Letters of José Señán, O.F.M., Mission San Buenaventura: 1796-1823* (John Howell Books: San Francisco, 1962), p.p. 22, 68.

³Priestly, Herbert I, Ed. *A Historical, Political, and Natural Description of California by Pedro Fages, Soldier of Spain*, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1937), p.p., 34-35.

Luisia Ygnacio, John Peabody Harrington's Santa Barbara Chumash consultant, provided the name of the basket-making place. Harrington, linguist and ethnologist for the Bureau of American Ethnology, worked with a number of Chumash consultants from about 1911 until the time of his death in the early 1960s. Among them was Fernando Librado who provided the largest portion of information on Chumash basketry. It should be noted that in the spelling of the Chumash basket-making place called *aknepmu'u*, the English letter e has been substituted for Harrington's phonetic symbol.

⁴Holland, Brenda. Personal communication received by Eleanor Tulman Hancock, 1986.

⁵Dawson, Lawrence & Deetz, James *Archaeological Survey Report* (University of California, 1965), Plate 14.

Holland. Personal communication, 1982.

Timbrook, Janice. Personal communication, 1980.

The inscribed portion of the Santa Barbara basket has a stitch count of up to 285 stitches per square inch, presumably having been added to the basket at a later date.

⁶Hancock, Eleanor Tulman. Personal communication, 1986.

⁷Dawson and Deetz, Plates 7a, 16a.

Herold, Joyce, "Chumash Baskets: from the Malaspina Collection," *American Indian Art Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p.p. 68-75.

The Malaspina baskets collected in 1791 by the Alejandro Malaspina explorers are attributed to the Chumash as are other baskets whose provenances are not well documented, yet have the characteristics of Chumash baskets outlined in the work of Dawson and Deetz.

⁸Holland.

⁹Professor Robert Lopez (1986) of Moorpark College, at the request of Ventura County Historical Museum personnel, researched the entries for the name María Sebastiana made before 1830 in the Mission San Buenaventura Baptismal and Burial Records. His research revealed entry numbers 48 and 1098. Entry number 48 is for a María Sebastiana baptized in 1784, almost at the inception of the Mission San Buenaventura. She was one of the very early neophytes of the mission. Entry number 1098 is found in Book 2 of the Mission

San Buenaventura Baptismal Records. She was among a party who traveled to California from the Sandwich Islands.

¹⁰Engelhardt, Zephyryn, *San Buenaventura, the Mission by the Sea*, 1930, p.p. 158-160.

¹¹Smith, p. 67.

¹²Pillar dollars were milled (minted) between 1772 and 1825 in the New World colonies and depict the kingdoms of Leon, Castile, and Granada as well as the coat of arms of the Bourbons set below a representation of the Spanish crown. Beside the representation stand two "pillars of Hercules." Pillar coins of lesser denomination carry the same design, so for ease of discussion, the term "pillar dollar" has been chosen.

A second Spanish colonial coin, the globe dollar, depicts two globes set below a representation of the Spanish crown also bordered by the "pillars of Hercules." Globe dollars were milled from 1732-1773. Because lesser denominations carry the same design, the term "globe dollar" is used.

¹³Smith, p. 65.

¹⁴Nuttal, Zelia, "Two Remarkable California Baskets," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 341.

Records of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.

¹⁵Hancock.

¹⁶Menzies, Archibald, "Journal of the Vancouver Expedition," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 326.

¹⁷Smith, p. 68.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Lillian Smith was born in Blaine, Washington, one of the immigration points from Canada into the United States. Her primary degree is in pure and applied mathematics; post-graduate degree, in anthropology from University of California at Berkeley.

Her field of expertise is Chumash basketry. Not only has she studied Chumash baskets wherever they are held or displayed, she has made them herself and teaches others to do so. She has studied the notes of eminent anthropologist, J. P. Harrington, both in the Smithsonian and at U.C. Berkeley. Her previous publication, "Three Inscribed Chumash Baskets With Designs from Spanish Colonial Coins" (*American Indian Art Magazine*, Vol. 7, No. 3), serves as prelude to the following article.

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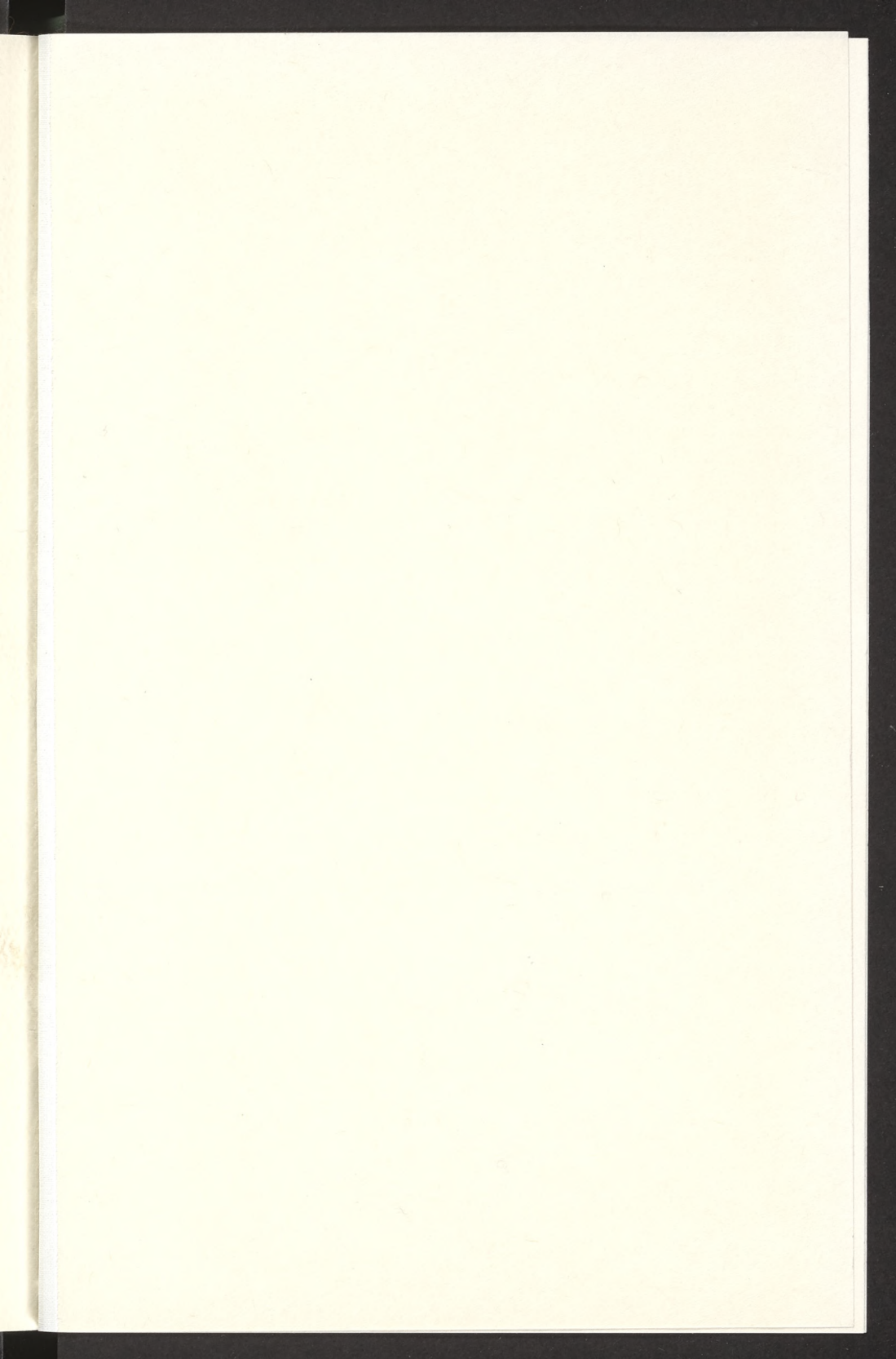
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